

TWO DECADES OF COMICS

— A REVIEW —

BOLLAND

£1



Slings and Arrows presents:

TWO DECADES OF COMICS

HOW TO USE THE GUIDE

This guide attempts to review all series of interest to collectors in the comic book format. It will, therefore, not contain any details of digest comics, black and white magazines or colour magazines. In addition, romance titles are not included, and nor, on the whole, are non superhero humour comics.

The bulk of the Marvel and DC output has been included, but the spectrum of titles from other companies has been restricted to a selective choice of material. Although some of the comics have been in production since the 1930's, the reviews only apply to issues published between November 1961 and March 1981 inclusive. Any title still running in March 1981 has a plus sign after the number of issues that have appeared so far.

Comic strips are reviewed alphabetically, irrespective of company, and according to the title under which they appeared. Therefore, although the Guardians of the Galaxy effectively had their own title, the review appears under Marvel Presents. When a series changes title, it is treated as two separate comic books, although they are cross-referenced. The only exception to this is Luke Cage's title, which can be found under Power Man.

The column on the right of every entry lists (reading from top to bottom): the publishing company, the dates of the comic's production, the number of issues, any Annuals and Giant-Size issues outside the numerical sequence, and, below the dotted line, issues that the reviewer considers noteworthy. If a number appears in brackets before the dates, then the series begins with that number, although the issue total is the number that appeared on the final or March 1981 issue and therefore includes issues produced under another title. When a series is cancelled and later revived, the last issue prior to cancellation is noted in brackets after the date of cancellation.

Both the opinions expressed in the text and the choice of recommended issues may be attributed to the person whose initials appear beneath the review. It should be noted that the recommended issues have been selected relative to the standards attained by comics in general, and not with respect to their own particular title. In order that you can judge how your tastes correspond with those of each of the reviewers (and because we've always wanted to list them), each of us has picked our ten favourite comic series or runs of issues, and they can be found at the back of the booklet.

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INTRODUCTION

To anyone browsing in a shop, thanks for showing the interest to pick this up. To anyone who's actually bought it, thanks even more!

The incentive to produce "Two Decades of Comics" arose because of the absence of such a publication in comics fandom. There have been checklists of individual writers' and artists' works compiled, and many highly informative price guides have been assembled but, to date, a systematic collection of reviews has not appeared. As a result many newcomers to the field have had little idea where to start buying in order to build up a collection. Even seasoned campaigners wishing to sample back issues of a title they are unfamiliar with have often had to resort to trying a random sampling of issues unless they have been lucky enough to borrow some first.

As well as being a guide to buying comics, it is hoped that this work will prove entertaining to all comics' enthusiasts, although the fan who will probably benefit most will be the one who is fairly new to the field, has a small collection and at least a rudimentary knowledge of the major characters in the comics.

As is inevitable, all reviews contained herein are subject to the opinions of the individual reviewers (see Conan and King Conan for two conflicting reviews of essentially the same title). In general though, the judgements expressed are held by the majority of fans, and when they differ, this has been pointed out in the text.

Thanks must, of course, go to all those who assisted in this production, notably all the artists, Alan Austin (whose price guides were invaluable in researching dates), Geoff Lamprey and Jim Consantinou for lending comics to be reviewed, Joe Gibbons, who also lent comics and reviewed a couple of titles himself, and Trevor Phoenix for helping out with the Star Wars review.

DAVID W. CUTLER

FRANK PLOWRIGHT

ADRIAN P. SNOWDON

STEVE WHITAKER

HASSAN YUSUF

THE ARTISTS

Cover.....	Brian Bolland
Aquaman.....	Martin Forrest
Captain Atom.....	Terry Gould
The Creeper.....	Dave Horasby
Deathlok.....	Nick Neocleous
The Demon.....	Paul Jay
Demon Hunter.....	Ian Goswell
Flash.....	Trevor Phoenix
The Forever People.....	Dave Freedman
The Geek.....	Hassan Yusuf
The Guardians of the Galaxy.....	Neil Beesley
Iron Jaw.....	Kev Sutherland
Jonah Hex.....	Brian Williamson
Killraven.....	Simon Thorpe
Machine Man.....	Steve Craddock
Metamorpho.....	Paul Delapenha
Mr Miracle.....	Joe Eckers
Red Wolf.....	Steve Whitaker
Spiderwoman.....	Floyd Hughes
The Werewolf.....	Steve Lowther

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ACTION

An appropriate title to begin with, as it started the whole superhero culture with Superman's debut in issue 1. The format mainly used has been a lead Superman feature with a back-up.

Action in the 1960's was typical of the comics that editor Mort Weisinger produced. They had all the characteristics that constitute the Superman legend: imaginary stories, kryptonite (of all hues and colours), loss of powers, villains from the Phantom Zone, the bottle city of Kandor and the problem of keeping his identity a secret. The back-up strip for most of these issues was Supergirl, who had more or less the same adventures as her cousin. The Legion of Superheroes took her place in 377-392 and made the comic worth reading.

Action was eventually entirely turned over to Superman and when Julie Schwartz became editor a new direction began. Most distinctive was the emergence of Clark Kent as a major character. Cary Bates became the main writer and turned the comic into an enjoyable and entertaining title. Though never fantastic it's had a few gems, eg. "The Immortal Superman" (385-387), "The Return of Jonathan Kent" (507-508) and "Lex Luthor Reforms" (510-512), all written by Bates.

A major factor in the success of Action has been the superb art of Curt Swan.

Back-ups have included Congorilla in 258-261, Metamorpho in 413-418 and the Human Target, Green Arrow and Atom during the 1970's.

DC

From Jun 38

517 issues +

309,318,319,340,
351-354,361-366,
377-397,400-402,
480-484,490,491,
500,507,508,510-
512.

HY

ADVENTURE

The earlier Adventures featured Superboy, Aquaman Green Arrow or Congorilla, but from 285 Superboy became the star and a new back-up feature was introduced, the witty "Tales of the Bizarro World". No. 300 saw the start of the comic's most famous series: The Legion of Super-Heroes. They started off as the back-up strip, but soon took over the whole comic. The LSH were probably the most enjoyable super-group at that time. Their stories kept on improving and got to the epic stage when Jim Shooter began writing their tales.

(From 346). He introduced the Fatal Five (352-353) and Mordru (369-370) and wrote such classics as "The Circle of Death" (367) and "The Outlawed Legion" (359-360) and these were only the tip of the iceberg.

Supergirl took over the title from 381. Her most impressive stories were produced under the editorship of Mike Sekowsky. Though never renowned for his artwork, he was one of DC's better writer/editors. He gave Supergirl new problems such as fading super powers and an interesting personal life. Since 425 Adventure has featured numerous series: the Black Orchid (428-430) - a well produced series about a mysterious super heroine - and the Spectre (431-440) which caused some talk in fandom at the time due to the unusual ways scripter Mike Fleisher had the Spectre dispose of his victims. Turning them to wood and running them through an electric buzz-saw was one of the more imaginative methods.

Aquaman starred in a successful series by Levitz, Michelinie and Aparo. He was soon re-instated in his own title, as was Superboy, who starred in 450-458. The title became a Dollar Comic for 8 issues from 459. It featured many series, the best of which were the New Gods in 459-460 and the Justice Society of America in 461-466. Issues 467-478 saw a new superhero, Starman, by Levitz and Ditko, and Plastic Man by Wein, Pasko and Staton, who produced his best work since E-Man. They were joined by Aquaman from 475.

From 479 the title has been called Adventure Comics Presents Dial H For Hero. The first new issue was fun and starred heroes and villains created by fans.

DC

From Dec 35

479 issues +

340-380,397-409,
428-430,459-466.

HY

ADVENTURES ON THE PLANET OF THE APES

This reprinted stories from the Planet of the Apes magazine in colour. Nothing particularly impressive here. If you're an Apes fanatic the black and white originals are far better value.

MARVEL
Oct 75-Dec 76
11 issues

FP

ALL AMERICAN MEN OF WAR

Formerly All American Western, this was an average war comic with fairly decent stories during the sixties. Its regular feature was either Johnny Cloud (who later joined the Losers) or, believe it or not, Balloon Buster.

DC
Sep 52-Oct 76
117 issues

HY

ALL OUT WAR

Another average war comic from DC, this time in the Dollar Comic format. Its main feature was the Viking Commando, a true viking who avoided Valhalla and spent his time helping the Allied cause against the Nazis in the usual Viking way.

DC
Sep 79-Jul 80
6 issues

HY

ALL STAR

Probably the most requested revival of all time was that of the Justice Society's book. The original super team of the 1940's had been revived as early as 1964 in the JLA, but it wasn't until 1976 that DC were confident enough to restore the Earth 2 super team to their own book. The scripts were initially handled by Gerry Conway, who introduced new characters and updated others, but failed in an attempt to imitate the style of the older stories. Paul Levitz began scripting with issue 62. He turned the book into one of the best on a crowded market, with well defined characters and clever plots, lapsing only with the final issue. The series continued in Adventure 461-466 and DC Special 29 related the origin of the Justice Society.

DC
Summer 40-Mar 51
(57)
Feb 76-Oct 78
74 issues

62-73.

FP

ALL STAR WESTERN

The second series to bear this name - the first ended prior to the period covered here - lasted 11 issues before a title change to Weird Western. Four new strips were created for the book, which was padded out with reprints, the most notable of which was Batlash. Of the new series Billy the Kid and Outlaw were poor, but El Diablo, crippled, yet able to avenge evil when possessed by an Indian spirit was a nice strip with some lovely Gray Morrow art. However it was the scarred bounty hunter, Jonah Hex, who first appeared in issue 10, who was to prove the greatest success, with some superbly inventive stories stemming from his unconventional character.

DC
Sep 70-May 72
11 issues

2,10,11.

FP

AMAZING ADVENTURES (1)

Inhumans 1-10

The Inhumans, a race of humans genetically altered by the Kree generations ago, finally gained their own series after having been supporting characters for many years. The first four issues were very ordinary and the last two tedious, but 5-8 (Thomas/Adams) produced a dramatic storyline which had connections with the Kree-Skrull war in the Avengers.

MARVEL
Aug 70-Nov 76
39 issues

11-16.

Black Widow 1-8

Another long-time supporting character in her own series, it made a change to see the defected Russian super-spy fighting some non-super powered villains and to get a view of her life out of costume. These factors apart the stories lacked depth and inspiration, although 5 (the best) was fairly acceptable.

Beast 11-17

The first charter member of the X-Men to leave the group permanently broke away into his own series and almost immediately mutated to become far more beast-like than he ever was before. This six issue run by Englehart and Sutton had marvellous plotting and sub-plotting, superb use of all the supporting characters and featured one of the most dramatic and total defeats ever of a super-villain in 13. 17 is a reprint, but the series concluded in Hulk 161.

War of the Worlds 18-39

Based on concepts from H.G. Wells' novel, this feature related the adventures of Killraven (a trained gladiatorial fighter with minor psychic powers) and his followers in the 21st century, several years after the Martians had returned and successfully conquered earth. Although this is held in high regard by fandom, I feel that it is very overrated; the character development and dialogue are marvellously handled by McGregor, but often at the expense of a plot. An overall view tends to produce a feeling of lack of direction. For an example of an original and unconventional comic, issue 27 on are worth buying. McGregor and Russell began to put things together here, but do watch out for the fill-ins.

APS

AMAZING ADVENTURES (2)

This series reprinted the first eight issues of the original X-Men by Lee and Kirby. It differed from the usual Marvel reprints because no pages were cut. Definitely worth getting if you can't afford the originals.

MARVEL

Dec 79-Jan 81
14 issues

FP

AMAZING FANTASY

This title was one of the last of the 1950's weird story comics and featured some of the best of them. The book was titled Amazing Adventures for issues 1-6 and Amazing Adult Fantasy for the next 8. Despite being Amazing Fantasy for only one issue, the series is best known by this name because of the first appearance of Spiderman in 15. As it was known in advance that cancellation was imminent, writer Stan Lee decided to try a new and different superhero - a superhero with problems - in the last issue on the principle that if the concept was a flop sales wouldn't be affected. I wonder if it ever caught on?

APS

ANGEL AND THE APE

This was a humour series which featured Private Investigators Angel O'Day and her gorilla partner Sam Simeon. The cases they got involved them in the usual detection adventures.

An interesting sub-plot involved the part-time job Sam had, a comic strip artist for an editor named Stan Bragg, who went around dressed in a Stars and Stripes costume and who eventually goes potty! The final issue was titled Meet Angel. A nice series for a laugh.

DC

Dec 68-Dec 69
7 issues

HY

ANTHRO

This wasn't the usual prehistoric/jungle series that it appeared to be. It was a well-written, witty account of a Stone-age family, the main character being Anthro, the eldest son. Howie Post wrote and drew the strip and his art suited the setting perfectly. If you want to read something different try this comic.

DC
Aug 68-Aug 69
6 issues

1-6.

HY

AQUAMAN

After being around for a couple of decades, Aquaman finally got his own title. It quickly became an entertaining series under writer Bob Haney and artist Nick Cardy. Aquaman soon became king of Atlantis, took a queen from another dimension, Mera, and had a son, Aquababy.

The series continued in an average way until issue 40 when Dick Giordano became editor. He brought Steve Skeates and Jim Aparo with him and they produced a multi-part saga involving Aquaman's quest for a kidnapped Mera (40-46). Issues 50-52 contained Deadman back-up strips by Neal Adams that tied into the continuity of the Aquaman stories.

The series was cancelled, but was revived in 1977 after a successful run in Adventure. This new series by David Michelinie and Jim Aparo, though not quite as good as the original run, was well handled. The most interesting development was the murder of Aquababy by the Black Manta. The title was again cancelled after 7 issues, although it certainly deserved to be kept on the stands. One of the more enjoyable DC titles.

DC
Feb 62-Apr 71(56)
Sep 77-Sep 78
63 issues

40-56.

HY

ARMY AT WAR

Despite the banner proclaiming "an exciting new idea" across the cover this was an ordinary war anthology book that didn't differ much in quality from other such books. It only lasted one issue due to the DC implosion.

DC
Nov 78
1 issue

FP

ASTONISHING TALES

Doctor Doom 1-8

Roy Thomas and Wally Wood handled the first four issues and did a creditable job on a difficult concept - giving the standard "hero with problems" treatment to a villain. Larry Lieber and George Tuska "crafted" issues 5 and 6, but the last two issues were fairly well scripted by Gerry Conway.

MARVEL
Aug 70-Jul 76
36 issues

1-4, 12-13, 25-28,
30-36.

Ka-Zar 1-20

This strip simply never managed to get on an even keel, although many individual issues make for good reading. A particularly good story appears in 12 and 13 by Thomas and Wein, in which the Man-Thing guest-starred and Ka-Zar managed to get away from his Tarzan clone character.

It, The Living Colossus 21-24

An awful series from Isabella and Ayers. It was a reworking of one of Marvel's many pre 1962 monsters. Avoid it.

Deathlok the Demolisher 25-28, 30-36

One of those oddities that Marvel throw out every now and then, a character who is completely outside the Marvel mould. Set in 1990, Deathlok was an army colonel who died and was then rebuilt as a

cyborg. He then revolted against his masters and went in search of his humanity in a well-portrayed future of intrigue and decay. Rich Buckler (whose concept it was) did some of his finest art and plotting in these stories, with some help from Doug Moench and Bill Mantlo.

DWC

ATOM

Using a white dwarf star fragment scientist Ray Palmer developed a method of shrinking himself down from his six foot to sub-microscopic size. After a successful run in Showcase the Atom was awarded his own title. Probably editor Julie Schwartz's most "scientific" character, the Atom's adventures were mainly science fiction based with a human/detective feel about them. Very few super-villains turned up, though near the end of the series the stories did become more super-hero oriented and were handled quite well.

Worth mentioning is the semi-series that ran through a few issues - "The Time Pool" - where the mighty mite travelled back in time and met historical figures such as Jules Verne and Edgar Allen Poe.

With the exception of the last issue all the stories were written by Gardner Fox and drawn by Gil Kane, so no artistic complaints here. Although never a really exciting title it's still worth reading. With issue 39 the title became Atom and Hawkman.

HY

ATOM AND HAWKMAN

Merging their individual books was a badly timed attempt by DC to keep the two characters in print; basically because all the split books seemd to have disappeared a couple of years beforehand.

This title occasionally featured separate stories of the two characters and occasionally team-ups. Hawkman and Atom always meshed well in team-ups and it's sad that the mag only survived 7 issues. Distinguished and unusual art graced most issues and O'Neil and Fox came up with some good scripts too, notably Fox's "Panic Button" stories in 40-41. Good stuff.

SW

AVENGERS

Of Marvel's superhero series this is arguably the best. Lapses from quality have been rare and short-lived and the diversity of powers and personalities in a constantly shifting roster - nearly all of Marvel's characters have been or guest starred with the Avengers - make the team just as adaptable to a plot set in Olympus, the future or New York. The first 34 issues were scripted by Stan Lee in his inimitable old style and illustrated by Kirby (1-8) and Heck (9 on). Roy Thomas took over the writing with 35 and after a shaky start he was teamed with John Buscema and they got better and better. Thomas peaked with one of the finest ever comic runs (69-86) and followed that with the epic Kree-Skrull war sequence (89-97). His finest individual moment was the creation of the Vision in 57. After the Olympus trilogy, illustrated by Barry Smith, and a Sentinels tale, Steve Englehart assumed the scripting, starting with 105. He also took time to hit his stride, but after the Avengers-Defenders crossover (115-118) he began producing winners until he left with 151. His best efforts were Giant Size issue 2 and 3. Jim

DC

Jul 62-Sep 68

38 issues

28-37.

DC

(39)Nov 68-Nov 69

45 issues

40,41.

MARVEL

From Sep 63

205 issues +

9 Annuals 67-71

76-79

5 GS Aug 74-Aug 75

57,58,69-86,115-

135,137-144,147-

151,158-168,170-

177. Annuals 1,2,

& 7. GS 1-4

Shooter followed a patchy Conway period with some excellent continued stories, culminating in the ten part Michael saga (167, 168, 170-177), Eagle award winner for the best continued story in 1978. Since then Michelinie, Grant and Gruenwald have together or separately produced stories that, while nice, have something lacking. The best Annual is 7, with script and art by Starlin, who used the book to conclude his Warlock storyline.

FP

BARBARIANS

Intended as a showcase title for barbarian characters, the only issue featured a below average Iron Jaw tale and the first chapter of Andrax (not the toilet paper), created by Rolf Kauka, premiere German comics scripter. It was slightly better than the lead story.

ATLAS
June 75
1 issue

FP

BATLASH

DC have always put more thought into their western series than other companies and before the coming of Jonah Hex, Batlash was the best. Premiered in Showcase 76, he was a fast gun with an appreciation of the finer things in life and a flower in his hat. A combination of humour, good plotting by Arogones and O'Neil and superb art from the underrated Nick Cardy make this a must for any collector, especially as prices remain reasonable.

DC
Nov 68-Nov 69
7 issues

1-7.

FP

BATMAN

The Batman tales in the early 1960's were really quite silly, featuring such concepts as aliens, science fiction, Bat-Mite, Bat-Hound etc. Definitely not the Batman Bob Kane and Bill Finger had in mind when they created him. The hero was rescued by editor Julius Schwartz who gave Batman a "new look" from 164. Detection was now the theme of the title with costumed villains very much in the background.

In 1966 the campy and highly successful Batman TV series started and greatly increased the sales of the comic. He was now more popular than ever but his stories, thankfully, didn't follow the style of the TV series, though a lot of Bat-gadgets did start turning up. Although this was a successful period for Batman the book remained extremely boring.

With the end of the TV series Batman's sales began to drop, so another new direction was needed. Thankfully Denny O'Neil and Neal Adams came along in the late sixties and gave us the true Batman - the creature of the night! Robin left to go to college and the last traces of the camp era disappeared. Their stories featured good adversaries such as Ras Al Ghul in 243-244 and the Joker in 251, the issue that brought back the Joker as he was first conceived: a crazed sadistic lunatic. For the most memorable Batman comic of the time read 257. It featured Batman and Robin in a 25 page story entitled "Night of the Reaper" by Denny O'Neil and Adams.

Since then things have been pretty dull, though the Shadow stories in 253 and 259 were interesting. Recent stories by Len Wein and Marv Wolfman have shown such interesting developments as a relationship between Batman and Catwoman.

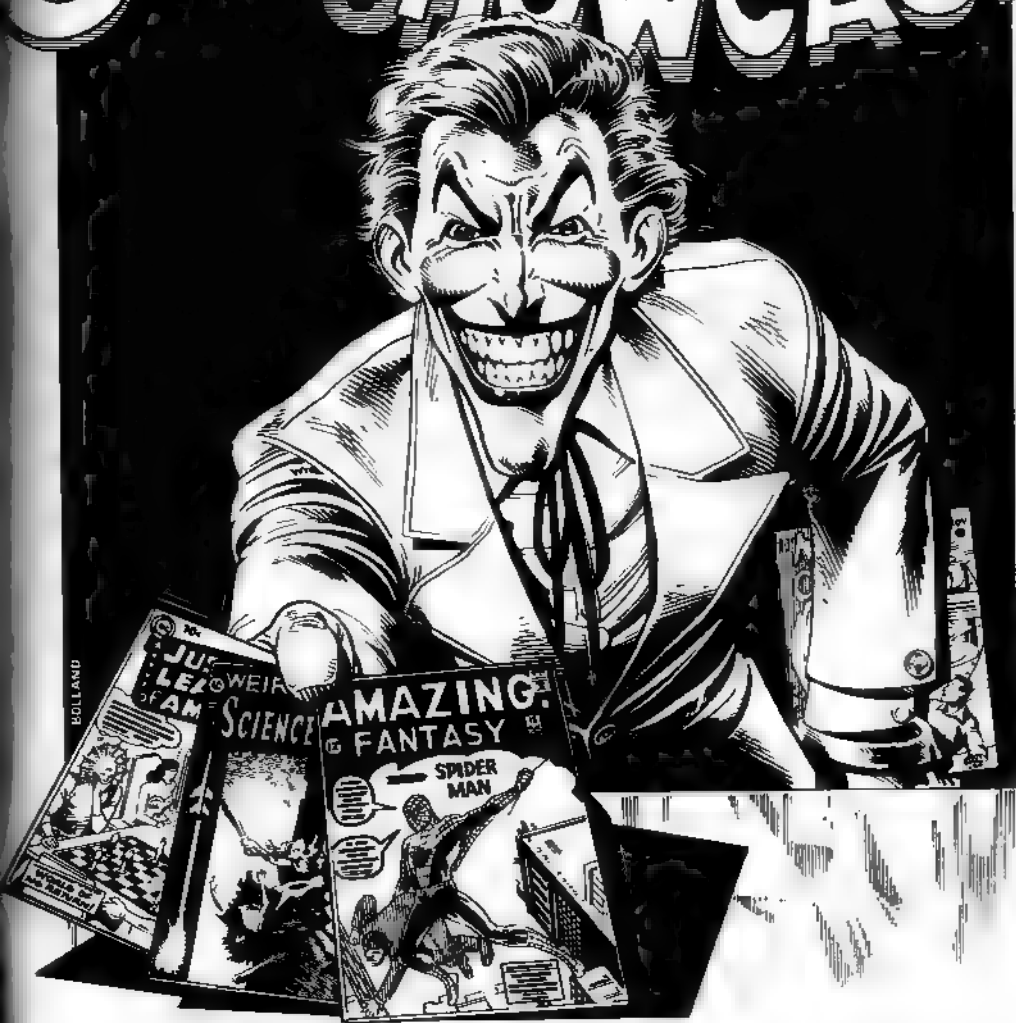
By far the best of the annuals and spectaculars is the 1978 one, featuring work by O'Neil, Rogers, Golden and Nasser. And no, I don't know how DC managed to fit seven annuals into four years.

DC
From Spring 40
333 issues +
7 Annuals 61-64
1 Spectacular 78

219, 232, 234, 237,
242-245, 251, 255,
300, 1978 Spect-
acular.

HY

COMIC SHOWCASE



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BATMAN FAMILY

This giant-size title featured Robin and Batgirl team-ups backed up by reprints of Batman stories from the 40's and 50's. With issue 11 it went to an all new format with solo Batgirl and Robin tales, but these stories remained bland throughout their run. The Man-Bat stories which commenced in the first all new issue were the definitive treatment of this character and were graced with some particularly fine artists, including Rogers, Austin, Chaykin and Golden. With issue 17 the title went dollar size and although Man-Bat declined quickly, the Batman stories were all very good; issues 18-20 are recommended as they carry some of the best work from Denny O'Neil and David V. Reed and all carry Mike Golden art.

DWC

DC
Oct 75-Nov 78
20 issues

11,12,14-16,18-20.

BATTLE CLASSICS

Due to the DC implosion this comic only lasted one issue. It reprinted a teaming of DC's main war heroes, including Sgt Rock, Johnny Cloud, Jeb Stuart from the Haunted Tank and Mlle Marie.

DC
Oct 78
1 issue

HY

BATTLESTAR GALACTICA

Early issues adapted the TV series in a somewhat lethargic fashion. As is always the way, just as the book had begun to pick up and had gained a permanent creative team it was cancelled. All the later issues with Walt Simonson art and story make for good reading, though it was never an outstanding book.

MARVEL
Mar 79-Jan 81
23 issues

19,20,22,23.

DWC

BEOWULF

Another of the mid-seventies DC barbarian strips. I find it very hard to read American idioms such as "I owe him one!" or "In a pigs eye it is!" coming from the mouth of a character from popular European folklore. Ricardo Villamonte's artistry is similarly inconsistent but, on the whole, passable. Result: forgettable.

DC
May 75-Mar 76
6 issues

SW

BEWARE

This all reprint title contained 1950's weird/horror stories. The title changed to Tomb of Darkness from issue 9 onwards.

MARVEL
Mar 73-May 74
8 issues

APS

BLACK CAT

Although the pre 1961 issues were a nice mix of good girl art and bondage (which earned the title a mention in "Seduction of the Innocent") the last years were very poor. The heroine was a movie star who dressed up in a skimpy costume and ran around chasing various cliched plots. Don't bother.

HARVEY
Jul 46-Apr 63
65 issues

DWC

BLACKHAWK

DC inherited this series from Quality and it was a series you either loved or hated, but they must have had something going for them, as their book was published throughout the 40's, 50's and 60's (and no other team managed that).

DC
Aug 41-Nov 68(243)
Feb 76-Feb 77
250 issues



The Blackhawks were an international group of ace pilots. Their stories could encompass pure adventure, alien creatures, science-fiction or super-powered costumed villains. Nothing seemed beyond their scope. In issues 230-241 the "magnificent 7" became super heroes, but this was not a very successful series and the book was cancelled.

It was revived in 1976, this time with the Blackhawks as mercenaries. There were a few interesting developments during their new look, but on the whole it bored me to death.

The earlier issues are worth buying for the sense of fun that permeated the stories.

HY

BLACK GOLIATH

The third person to bear the identity of Goliath was Bill Foster, a Stark technician. He was awarded his own title during a period of expansion and it was cancelled during a period of recession. This comic serves as a good yardstick for judging others, being neither very good, nor shamefully bad.

MARVEL

Feb 76-Nov 76
5 issues

FP

BLACK HOLE

A lukewarm adaptation of the movie(1-3) and beyond. Easily the most tedious title reviewed in this book.

WESTERN

From Mar 80
6 issues +

DWC

BLACK LIGHTNING

The man with the force field was DC's attempt to portray a modern black super-hero. Created by Tony Isabella, the series had Black Lightning battling the "100", a criminal organisation run by Tobias Whale. Although nice, there's nothing really outstanding here. The series was cancelled in the DC implosion, and issue 11 had a back-up story starring the Ray.

DC

Apr 77-Oct 78
11 issues

HY

BLACK MAGIC

This was a reprint series that featured pre comics code horror stories by Joe Simon and Jack Kirby. A lot of these are better than the mystery stuff done these days. The dated art style gives the stories an eerie feel.

DC

Nov 73-May 75
9 issues

HY

BLACK PANTHER

What can one say about Jack Kirby's later Marvel work? Where McGregor's T'Challa was a man living in an only too real world, Kirby's version of his own creation was surrounded by ancient frogs, aliens and midgets. Ed Hannigan produced two nice last issues, but the series will be remembered for Kirby.

MARVEL

Jan 77-May 79
15 issues

DWC

BLAZING BATTLE TALES

A tedious book that differs from myriad other war titles only by the fact that it contained the Atlas trademark of excessive explicitly portrayed violence.

ATLAS

July 75
1 issue

FP

BLITZKRIEG

An attempt to show World War 2 through the enemy's eyes, which never really lived up to its expectations. DC's top war story writer Robert Kanigher scripted and the art was handled by Ric Estrada, whose work, though not exceptional, suited the series.

DC
Feb 76-Oct 76
5 issues

HY

BLUE BEETLE

This is one of the best books that Charlton ever produced and the best post Marvel work that Steve Ditko did. Drawing from the somewhat insipid early sixties character, Ditko wove an excellent mini-series around the disappearance of the original Blue Beetle and the mystery of the new Beetle's background. Though the book lacked the shadowy depth of Spiderman, there is an equal depth of characterisation and the book is sadly underrated. The back-up was the Question - a Creeper/Spirit character - an excellent early vehicle for Ditko's right wing views and makes good reading in itself. Unfortunately issue 6 is not by Ditko and is the pits.

CHARLTON
Jun 67-Dec 68
6 issues

1-5.

DWC

BOMBA THE JUNGLE BOY

Based on a TV series, this was a worthy try at the jungle hero theme. Following a poor start the series steadily improved under the talents of Denny O'Neil and Jack Sparling. Nothing great here.

DC
Oct 67-Oct 68
7 issues

HY

BOY COMMANDOS

Reprints of an early Simon/Kirby strip from the 40's in which the heroes were a group of international children (no girls) who fight the Nazis. As is usual with Simon and Kirby books, the stories rise above the weak concept to become enjoyable reading.

DC
Sep 73-Nov 73
2 issues

1,2.

DWC

BRAVE AND THE BOLD

This started off as a showcase title featuring such concepts as the JLA (28-30 were their first appearances) and Hawkman in 34-36 and 42-44. Issue 50 was the first team-up and 54 saw the conception of the Teen Titans. 57 was the first appearance of Metamorpho and 61 and 62 featured Starman and the Black Canary by Gardner Fox and Murphy Anderson. The title then became a team-up book for Batman (with a few interruptions). The early Batman team-ups were quite well done, but nothing really special until Neal Adams took over the art. His Brave and Bold contributions are by far the best run the title ever produced.

DC
From Sept 55
172 issues +

28-30, 34-36, 42-44,
57, 58, 61, 62, 65, 79-
103.

With Adams gone Nick Cardy and later Jim Aparo took over and with writer Bob Haney produced some really interesting, entertaining and tightly plotted stories. It really was amazing how much Haney could fit into a 17 page story. The mag soon fell into a rut though, from which it has never really recovered. The most interesting issue recently has been 167, in which Marv Wolfman and Dave Cockrum teamed Batman with the Blackhawks during WW2.

The back-up strip these days is Nemesis, which is fairly well produced by Cary Burkett and Dan Speigle.

There was a Brave and Bold Special in 1978 which featured Batman, Sgt Rock and Deadman.

HY

THE BRUTE

The Brute was Atlas' answer to the Hulk: A frozen caveman revived in the seventies and prone to mindless violent rampages through civilisation. Badly written and (with the exception of a lovely cover on issue 1) badly drawn.

ATLAS
Feb 75-Jul 75
3 issues

FP

CAPTAIN ACTION

DC beat Marvel by a decade in adapting a toy into one of their comics, when Ideal's Captain Action became embedded in the DC universe.

Archeologist Prof. Clive Arno found an unusual ancient ruin with some coins which, when held, gave the holder the power of the God portrayed on the coin. Prof. Arno became Captain Action, and his son Action Boy. The only fault with the series was the stupid names and costumes. The creative talents were Jim Shooter and Gil Kane (plots) and art by Wally Wood and Kane.

This really was an exciting and powerful series that should have lasted more than 5 issues.

DC
Nov 68-Jul 69
5 issues

1-5.

HY

CAPTAIN AMERICA

The numbering follows on from Tales of Suspense and continues the same rut which Tales of Suspense began. 109-113 (part Steranko) are good, but Avengers 106-108 are really necessary to find out exactly what was going on. 114-120 (Red Skull, Cosmic Cube, first appearance of the Falcon) is a fairly ingenious storyline, but, with exceptions, 100-140 are utterly and completely uninspired.

Although the quality then picked up slightly, it was left to Steve Englehart to pull the book up from the depths. Englehart succeeded because he made Captain America a symbol of America instead of just another guy in a costume. Kirby then picked up the reins and the less said about his tenure the better. In 215-225, a reprint, a fill-in and 5 writers in 11 issues spoilt a promising sequence wherein Steve Rogers tried to discover what had happened in his life before he became Captain America. Thereafter mediocrity ruled until Roger Stern and John Byrne improved things with their current issues.

MARVEL
(100) From Apr 68
255 issues +
4 Annuals 71,72,
76,77.
1 GS Dec 75

110-113,153-183.

APS

CAPTAIN ATOM

The book was originally titled Strange Suspense stories; Captain Atom began in issue 75. The book was somewhat vapid with poor plots and, with the exception of the Ditko stories, poor art. The hero was an American called Capt Adam (!) with a similar look to the current Captain Marvel, though lacking the cosmic awareness. Issues 83 to 86 carried the tryout for the new Blue Beetle series and are good reading, but the title as a whole never developed beyond its superficial concept.

CHARLTON
(78)Dec 65-Dec 67
89 issues

83-86.

DWC

CAPTAIN CANUCK

Early issues were the solo work of Richard Comely and were rather painful to read. With the arrival of George Freeman on art the title began to improve and from issue 5 have got progressively better, although the book does suffer from Canadian chauvinism. Back-up strips have always been interesting and make for good reading.

COMELY
From July 75
13 issues +
1 Summer Special

10-12, Summer
Special.

DWC

CAPTAIN MARVEL

Captain Marvel's first two appearances were in Marvel Superheroes 12 and 13; but his own book quickly fell into a fairly standard, formulaised rut. The first 19 issues should be avoided. The plots generally involved him being given orders by his Kree superiors to perform (often lethal) experiments on earth people and him finding trite ways of disobeying them without arousing suspicion. After twice being cancelled, a shaky restart was swept aside by the great Thanos War series in 25-33, all plotted and drawn by Jim Starlin. This is a definite must and several odd issues of other titles also have interrelated stories (Iron Man 54, 55 and Marvel Feature (1) 12 etc.). Englehart then took over and 34-39 also have a good storyline in which the Watcher is tried by his own race for his interference in affairs on earth in the past. 41-46 have a worthwhile storyline which also explains some of the inconsistencies and co-incidences of his earlier issues. 47-56 fall into a bit of a slump, but the series picks up with Doug Moench's Titan plotline, which concludes in Marvel Spotlight (2) 1 and 2. APS

MARVEL
May 68-Dec 69 (19)
Jun 70-Aug 70 (21)
Sep 72-May 79
62 issues
1 GS Dec 75

25-46, 58-62.

CAPTAIN SAVAGE

A very similar title to Sgt. Fury, but it lacked the well-defined characters of the original. Gary Friedrich wrote and art was by Dick Ayers and John Severin and although they were competent the book was never anything other than a pale imitation of the Howlers. Issues 2-4 featured the origin of Hydra and are a good attempt at continuity.

MARVEL
Jan 68-Mar 70
19 issues

2-4, 8, 9.

DWC

CAPTAIN STORM

This featured Capt Storm, a wooden-legged P.T. boat skipper (later of Losers fame) and his battles against the Japanese in the Pacific. Very average war stories.

DC
Jun 64-Apr 67
18 issues

HY

THE CAT

This title was spawned in a "Women's Lib" period in which many comics about female characters were written by women (this one by Linda Fite). It tells of a girl whose mental and physical abilities were increased to their highest potential. The Cat was not explicitly bad, but suffered from a scarcity of subplots, uninspiring villains and a lack of direction.

MARVEL
Nov 72-Jun 73
4 issues

APS



CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN

The Challengers were four men who considered that they were living on borrowed time after having miraculously escaped death. They resolved to use this time to benefit mankind. Ace Morgan, Red Ryan, Prof Haley and Rocky Davis were created by Jack Kirby and were given their own mag after 4 appearances in Showcase. Most of their stories aren't that memorable, though Denny O'Neil wrote some nice stories in the late sixties. It was soon clear however that the comic, like the Challengers themselves, was living on borrowed time.

The first revival was all reprint. When revived again in 1977, after a successful run in Super-Team Family, the series was written by Gerry Conway and drawn by Mike Nasser and Keith Giffen, who all did a fine job. The Swamp Thing guest starred in 82-87, as did Deadman in 84-87. The last revival deserved to have been continued and is worth getting.

DC
May 58-Jan 71 (77)
Feb 73-Jul 73 (80)
Jul 77-Jul 78
87 issues

81-87.

HY

CHAMBER OF CHILLS

This title initially contained new material, most notably the first Marvel appearance of Brak the Barbarian in issue 2, but with the seventh issue it became a horror reprint title.

MARVEL
Nov 72-Nov 76
25 issues

FP

CHAMBER OF DARKNESS

This book printed stories similar in style to old fifties stuff that Marvel always reprints, but produced by the then current Marvel staff. There was some very nice stuff here, including a strip called "Starr the Slayer" in 4 by Roy Thomas and Barry Smith that was really the first Conan tale. Issues 7 and 8 only contained one new story and the book changed title to Monsters on the Prowl with issue 9.

MARVEL
Oct 69-Dec 70
8 issues
1 Annual 72

1-6.

FP

CHAMPIONS

This somewhat unlikely union of Hercules, Black Widow, Angel, Iceman and Ghost Rider was formed after all five of them had taken a hand in foiling one of Pluto's more obscure schemes when he attacked UCLA in order to capture Venus and Hercules. The major difference between the Champions and Marvel's other supergroups is that they were based on the West Coast (Los Angeles) and were formed, in theory, as "the superteam to help the average man".

The first six issues by Isabella were somewhat insipid, nevertheless the book had potential, as was proved by Bill Mantlo who effected a remarkable turnabout on taking up the scripting reins with issue 8. Byrne's arrival on pencils was also a distinct asset, but, unfortunately, the series was cancelled with 17. The dissolution of the Champions was tidied up in Peter Parker 17 and 18.

MARVEL
Oct 75-Jan 78
17 issues

7,8-10,12-15,17.

APS

CHAMPION SPORTS

A short lived (hardly suprising) title that featured ordinary sports stories by Joe Simon and Grandenetti.

DC
Nov 73-Mar 74
3 issues

TY

CLAW

A sword and sorcery series, this deserved more credit than it got. The hero was Vulcan, a man with a hairy, webbed hand which he kept covered with a gauntlet - this called "Claw". His hand also seemed to have a life of its own and there were interesting revelations about it later on.

The whole series was written by David Michelinie, one of the better writers at DC at the time. Ernie Chan drew the first 7 issues and was replaced by Keith Giffen, who produced some lovely, if somewhat confusing, graphics.

The title lived under the shadow of Conan, although it was never as boring.

DC
Jun 75-Oct 76 (9)
Apr 78-Sep 78
12 issues

HY

COMBAT KELLY

This was a war comic about a platoon of twelve ex-cons, one female, known as the Deadly Dozen. They were led by Combat Kelly. The books strictly followed the Marvel war comics formula until the last issue, when all the major characters were killed - probably Marvel's most realistic war comic.

MARVEL
Jun 72-Oct 73
9 issues

FP

CONAN

Conan is a classic example of an original and inventive comic deteriorating into a trivial parody of former glories.

Originally created by Robert E. Howard in a series of 1930's novels, Conan was a barbarian who wandered around ancient earth, encountering a bewildering array of demons, monsters and magicians. He was the first character of his ilk to appear in the comics format and during the initial rush of enthusiasm Roy Thomas produced some fine early tales and some good adaptations. His vision was ably interpreted by Barry Smith as artist. His Conan was not the musclebound clod that appears today, but was almost delicately (if such a word can be applied to Conan) portrayed. The first 15 issues and 19-24 were the undoubted artistic highspot of the series, the best story being "The Song of Red Sonja" in 24. John Buscema became artist with 25 and, apart from the occasional fill-in, has remained with the book ever since. His first issues were of a high standard, but his work since, while proficient, has been unspectacular and this seems to have coincided with Thomas temporarily losing interest in the title. Thomas' ambitious chronicalling of the the three years Conan spent with the pirate queen, Belit, (58-100) was a spectacular failure. While maintaining the admirable concept of relating comic time to real time it was drawn out and anyone familiar with the original novels knew the outcome anyway. At best (rarely) it was readable. At worst (the multi-character crossover) it was laughably trite. The only really good issue in three years was a story that had originally appeared in Conan's infinitely superior black and white magazine and was reprinted in 78. With Thomas recently moving to DC Marc de Matteis

MARVEL
From Oct 70
120 issues +
5 Annuals 73,76-79
5 GS Sep 74- 75

24,78.

has inherited the scripting chores and has so far been a breath of fresh air, although Buscema remains static as artist.

FP

COUGAR

Average stuff about a stuntman who became involved with a vampire and a werewolf. The blurb for issue 3 promised "The most devastatingly different superhero of all time", and for once it might have been, since the Cougar broke his spine in issue 2.

ATLAS
Apr 75-Jul 75
2 issues

Alas it never appeared.
FP

CREATURES ON THE LOOSE

The numbering starts with issue 10 and continues from Tower of Shadows. Issue 10 features the first Kull strip. 11-15 feature weird/horror reprint stories and 16-33 all have 1 or 2 such stories as backups. Gullivar Jones and Thongor occupied issues 16-21 and 22-29 respectively. The former was an early version of John Carter concerning a man teleported to Mars to engage in heroic-fantasy type battles and was fairly acceptable. Created by Lin Carter, Thongor was another barbarian a la Conan in all respects bar quality, which was abominable. Both storylines concluded when their features finished, which made a refreshing change.

MARVEL
(10) Mar 71-Sep 75
37 issues

33-37.

Man-Wolf 30-37

In Spiderman 124, 125 J.J. Jameson's astronaut son John, discovered a weird gem embodying the essence of an alien intelligence. When worn, the gem had the effect of turning him into a werewolf whilst on earth and a stargod whilst on its home plane. The popularity of these 2 issues won Man-Wolf his own feature and although it initially appeared to be a flop the introduction of Kraft and Perez, taking over the storyline begun by Isabella in 32, transformed it into a dynamite little series. Despite being cancelled whilst in the most intriguing of situations the conclusion eventually saw light in Marvel Premiere 45 and 46.

APS

THE CREEPER

Newscaster Jack Ryder attended a costume party in a garish green wig and yellow body make-up. While there, he discovered an imprisoned professor who injected him with a serum that gave him additional strength and stamina and implanted him with a device that enabled him to transform himself instantly back to Jack Ryder. This was Steve Ditko's major contribution to the DC 60's renaissance. An appearance in Showcase proved popular enough to merit the Creeper his own title. The main body of this mag's all too brief run is linked together by a continuing plot thread, although Denny (Sergius O'Shaughnessy) O'Neil's clever co-plotting with Ditko makes each issue self contained. The epic is marred by Ditko leaving DC during the last issue, leaving them stuck for an appropriate artist to finish it off (Gil Kane got the job). Each issue is great, but check out 5 for an O'Neil/Ditko tour de force.

DC
Jun 68-Apr 69
6 issues

2,5.

SW

CRYPT OF SHALOWS

With a title like that I'm sure it'll come as no great surprise to learn that this was another one of Marvel's 50's weird/horror reprint comics.

MARVEL
Jan 73-Nov 75
21 issues

APS

DAREDEVIL

This very erratic series has tended towards extremes; the good issues being very good and the bad ones appalling. In Stan Lee's first 40 odd issues, Daredevil followed all the traditional super hero formulae and the plots never evinced any excitement or suspense at all. It took Roy Thomas (finishing off a plot begun by Lee) to bring in some tension around issue 50. Conway's run (72-98) began horribly, but the introduction of the Black Widow breathed miraculous new life into the strip. The two characters formed a perfect contrast and Colan's art (he'd been pencilling since 20) hit a peak in this period. Gerber struggled to find his feet with the book and his issues are disappointing apart from the marvellous epic versus Mandrill and Nekra in 108-112. The Black Widow left in 114; the reasons why she had to go were excellently handled by Isabella in 120-123. Following what was arguably its only period of mediocrity, Jim Shooter, Roger McKenzie and Frank Miller (art and later scri t too) brought the book up to its current brilliance.

APS

DAZZLER

The first issue of this title had eleven people listed in the credits, so you know it's bad. It also has eleven guest stars, so Marvel knew it was bad. If you're still not convinced as to quality it included the priceless scene of the Enchantress auditioning for the job of a night club singer. Buy it at your own risk.

MARVEL
From Mar 81
1 issue +

FP

DC PRESENTS

This is a Superman team-up title that has produced some nice stuff and a lot of rubbish. It got off to a good start, teaming Superman with Flash (1&2), Adam Strange (3) and the Metal Men (4) and all had the advantage of excellent Garcia-Lopez art. Many issues have featured J.L.A. members and other co-stars have included the LSH (13), Superboy (14) and the Phantom Stranger (23) in a connected tale concerning Pete Ross and his son.

Recent issues have been quite good, especially a three part saga by Len Wein and Jim Starlin in 27-29. Issue 26 not only contained a Wolfman/Starlin lead story with Green Lantern, but a free 16 page insert introducing the new Teen Titans, by Wolfman and Perez.

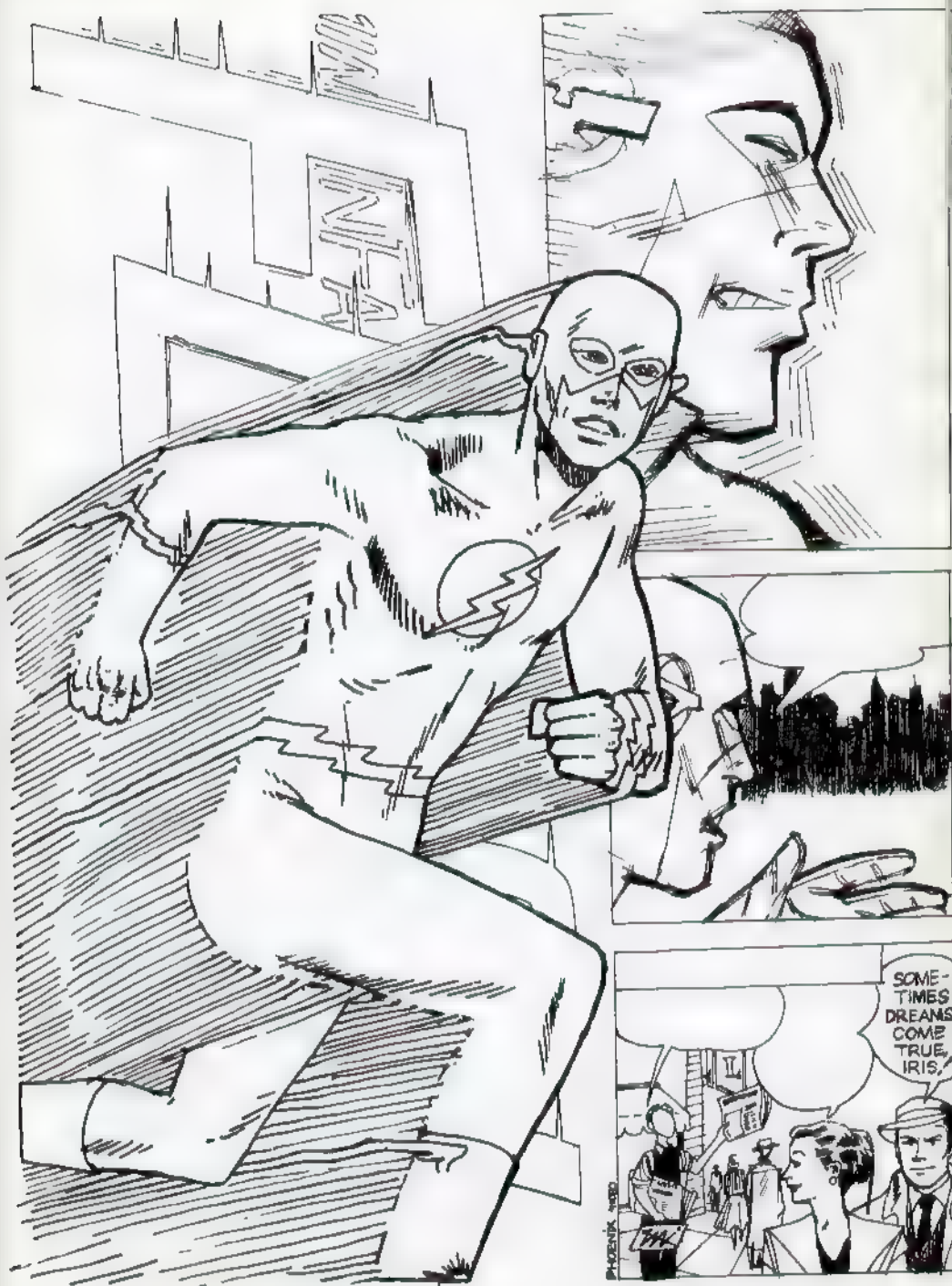
Since 25 there has been a back-up series called "Whatever happened to....." dealing with the fate of long forgotten heroes.

HY

DC SPECIAL

This was a giant-sized reprint title that eventually graduated to new material. Best of the reprints were the all Infantino issue

DC
Dec 68-Dec 71 (15)
Spring 75-Sep 77
29 issues



in issue 1; the superheroine issue (3) containing a previously unpublished 40's Black Canary tale; the all Kubert tales in 5 and the Jack Cole Plastic Man stories in 15. The best of the new tales were the last three issues, which contained Captain Comet and Tommy Tomorrow fighting dinosaurs (27); disaster stories starring Batman, Aquaman and the LSH (28) and the previously untold origin of the Justice Society of America in 29, a must for all JSA fans.

1,3,5,15,27-29.

HY

DC SUPERSTAR HOLIDAY SPECIAL

As with the earlier 5 Star Superhero Spectacular this was a one shot dollar comic that contained five separate tales of DC strips, this time featuring Batman, Sgt Rock, the LSH, Jonah Hex and three mystery tales linked by a framing sequence. All the stories revolved around the star over Bethlehem and although the mystery tales were the normal mundane fare, everything else was excellent. A comic worth getting and if you're still not convinced, Frank Miller drew the Batman tale.

DC
April 1980
1 issue (unnumbered)

April 80 issue

FP

DC SUPERSTARS

This was originally a giant sized reprint title, but it eventually switched to new material with issue 10. 11 was reprint but from 12 onwards contents were all new. Superboy in issue 12 is recommended as is the humorous work of Sergio Aragones (Mad and Plop artist) in 13. The Starhunters made an excellent debut in 16 and also very good was the first appearance and origin of the Huntress in 17, a comic which also contained the origin of Green Arrow and the first recorded case of the Legion of Super-Heroes.

DC
Mar 76-Feb 78
18 issues

12,13,16,17.

HY

DEAD OF NIGHT

The first ten issues contained the fairly predictable staple of 50's weird/horror reprints, but the last issue had a new full-length tale by Scott Edelman concerning the Scarecrow. He was the subject of a painting which was a dimensional gateway between earth and another dimension ruled by a demon and came to life to battle the demon's worshippers on earth. It was all pretty uninspired stuff, as were his subsequent appearances in Marvel Spotlight (1) 26 and Marvel Two-in-One 18.

MARVEL
Dec 73-Aug 75
11 issues

APS

DEFENDERS

Marvel's famous (notorious?) non-team first appeared in Marvel Feature (1) 1-3. Their members vary, the most permanent having been Dr Strange, Hulk, Valkyrie and Nighthawk. Issues 1-11 are by Englehart, 12-19 by Wein and all are above average, if nothing spectacular. 8-11 chronicle half of the Avengers-Defenders war. The book's most consistently good period was Gerber's reign in 20-29, 31-40; his best subplot being Valkyrie's quest to discover Barbara Noriss' past history.

MARVEL
From Aug 72
93 issues +
1 Annual 76
5 GS Jul 74-Jul 75

20-29,31-40,46-51,
Annual 1, GS 3-5.

For a delightful one issue story see Giant-Size 4, also written by Gerber and with some very good Don Heck art. Issues 41-45 can be ignored, but after Dave Kraft had settled in, he produced the excellent Scorpio saga in 46-51 which is to be recommended for anyone's collection. Thereafter, there is always something worth reading in 52-56, 58-61 (also by Kraft. 57 was a fill-in) after which the quality deteriorated rapidly as if in an ominous warning as to what was to come under Hannigan. For any completist who has 52-61 and wants the completion of the Lunatik plot, it occurs in 70-73 (Hannigan) but it's not exactly inspired stuff.

APS

DEMON

Etrigan the Demon is summoned by Merlin to battle Morgaine Le Fey. Etrigan takes human form and lives throughout history in a number of guises, the latest being Jason Blood, who is at first unaware that the Demon lives within him. Etrigan takes over the body whenever mystical danger threatens.

Interesting villains include Morgaine Le Fey in 1, 2, and 16 and Witchboy (who has a very unusual eat) in 7, 14 and 15.

The Demon was the creation of Jack Kirby, whose art and stories were still quite good at the time, although the stories were sometimes predictable and occasionally boring. Despite this the series was entertaining and a must for Kirby fans.

HY

DEMON HUNTER

The premiere appearance of the Rich Buckler character dedicated to preventing the birth of a race of demons on earth. The character later re-surfaced at Marvel under the guise of Devil-Slayer and the plotline was concluded in Defenders 59-61. One of Atlas' worthier efforts.

DC

Sep 72-Jan 74
16 issues

1, 2, 7, 14-16.

ATLAS

Sep 75
1 issue

1.

FP

DESTRUCTOR

A series created by Archie Goodwin and Steve Ditko about a teenager who is injected with a wonder fluid and assumes a costumed identity to track down his father's killers. An obvious Spider-Man rip-off, the Destructor was nonetheless an enjoyable series. Issue 2 was the only ND Atlas comic.

ATLAS

Feb 75-Sep 75
4 issues

1-4.

FP

DETECTIVE

The original home of the Batman has been sadly mistreated by DC and it remains one of the most inconsistent comics ever produced, alternating between sheer drivel and sheer delight. The early 60's were a weak period until, in 1964, Batman's character was revitalised by Julie Schwartz and Carmine Infantino and for the next few years the book concentrated on good detective stories that were always entertaining. With the coming of the TV series the book went into

DC

From March 37
500 issues +

327-343, 370-380,
395-410, 437-448,
468-479, 481-482,
500.

a fast nose dive and the campy look was to remain the hallmark of the book until the late sixties. In 1968 Frank Robbins began writing stories and though the art remained poor there was a general improvement leading to the excellent tales of the early 1970's. Though O'Neil, Adams and Giordano are the best known creative team on Detective during that time there were many other writers and artists who helped to move Batman closer to his original dark creature of the night image. In 1973 Archie Goodwin became editor of the book and produced many good stories and introduced many writers to the Batman. It was during this period that Goodwin wrote the Manhunter back up series (437-443) with art by Walt Simonson which has become a must for any collection. Although the last few years have been a period of ups and downs there has been one other flash of brilliance - this is of course, the six issue run by Steve Englehart and Marshall Rogers. By returning the Batman to the style of the 1940's they created what many people consider to be the definitive version of the darknight detective. Since then there have been some good stories, particularly the first Len Wein stories, but lately the book has moved into another period of inconsistency.

DWC

DEVIL DINOSAUR

The adventures of a pre-pubescent ape-boy and his big red dinosaur pal. This is the poorest of Jack Kirby's recent projects. His stories were trite and simplistic and anyone over the age of nine will get little satisfaction from this comic. If you insist on sampling Kirby's wares, number 3 is a good representative issue.

MARVEL
Apr 78-Dec 78
9 issues

SW

DOC SAVAGE

Steve Englehart and Gardner Fox adapted stories of the man of bronze from the original novels by Kenneth Robeson. Doc Savage was rather similar to the Batman of the TV series, just happening to have a bulletproof glass shield in front of his door when the assassin comes to call, etc. However if disbelief is suspended a tad more than usual this becomes an enjoyable book.

MARVEL
Oct 72-Jan 74
8 issues
1 GS 1975

FP

DOOM PATROL

This is one of comicdom's most underrated super-groups. The Doom Patrol consisted of four members - Robot Man, Negative Man, Elasti-Girl and the Chief, a brilliant scientist who brought together the former three, all of whom considered themselves freaks, due to their abnormal abilities. The group first appeared in My Greatest Adventure 80 and by 86 the book was retitled The Doom Patrol.

What's surprising about this title is that it had excellent continuity and subplots, something editor Murray Boltinoff is hardly renowned for. The stories and characterisation by Arnold Drake were excellent and the art by Bruno Premiani, though never impressive, somehow suited the mood of the stories. Overall it was a perfect combination of talent.

Due to falling sales it was decided to literally end the series with a big bang! The Doom Patrol were all killed when they

DC
(86)Mar 64-Oct 68
(121)
Feb 73-Jul 73
124 issues

87,90,91,93,96,97,
99-113,115-119,121.

sacrificed themselves rather than let a small village of 14 people be murdered.

122-124 were reprints and with the exception of Robot Man (who was revived for the new Doom Patrol in Showcase 94-96) the team has remained dead.

This is a must for any serious comic collector. I can't praise it enough.

HY

DOOMSDAY + 1

This title used the time honoured cliché of astronauts returning to a post nuclear devastated earth and fighting various monsters, mutants and aliens. John Byrne did the art throughout and plotted later issues, taking over from Joe Gill, and the series as a whole was fair reading. Issue 6 was the last new issue and sporadic reprints have appeared since then.

CHARLTON

Jul 75-May 76

12 issues

4,6.

DWC

DR STRANGE (1)

This enigmatic little series owed more to its breathtaking Colan-Palmer artwork than to the scripting. Although the plots were better than those in the latter issues of Strange Tales (from which the series carries on directly), Roy Thomas did not seem to be able to come up with any original ideas behind them. 174-177 and 180-183 are the best (in both story and art) and the plotlines conclude in Sub-Mariner 22 and Hulk 126 wherein Dr Strange renounces his use of magic and abandons his role as a sorcerer.

MARVEL

(169)Jun 68-Nov 69

183 issues

APS

DR STRANGE (2)

Ever since 1973 the character of Dr Strange has been virtually unrecognisable from that of the man portrayed in the early 60's Strange Tales stories. Whereas he was really nothing more than a superhero functioning in magical dimensions then, he has graduated since to become the truly eldritch and universal occultist he is now. This has allowed for some monumental concepts and extremely abstract ideas to be embraced within the plots. Although it requires the reader to utilise much thought in order to fully grasp all therein, the series is by no means to everybody's liking; the writer has so few limitations on what he can do that the reader has little chance for speculating or feeling any tension as literally anything could happen in the next few pages or issues. I can virtually guarantee that, if you like this stuff, then you'll like at least 80% of the series and, if not, you'll dislike nearly all of it. With this in mind, the high spots have been chosen in comparison with the series overall and not relative to other comics in general.

MARVEL

From Apr 74

45 issues +

1 Annual 76

1 GS 1975

6-13,15,16,Annual 1.

APS

DOORWAY TO NIGHTMARE

This was promoted as a class mystery book and excellent Mike Kaluta covers and the departure from DC's usual three stories per issue mystery format made it something different. Unfortunately for all of DC's

DC

Feb 78-Oct 78

5 issues



good intentions and art by Mayerik and Alcazar (1 & 2), the stories were just as average as the usual horror fare, the only discernable difference being their length. The book was cancelled in the 1978 DC implosion.

FP

DYNAMIC CLASSICS

A 44 page reprint title that was killed by the DC implosion. It featured "Secret of the Waiting Graves" from Detective 395 and the first Manhunter story from Detective 437.

DC
Oct 78
1 issue

DWC.

DYNAMO

A spinoff title from the Thunder Agents; it featured solo stories of the hero with the power belt and back up stories of various Thunder Agents. Art was by such notables as Wally Wood, Reed Crandall and Steve Ditko and it's good reading throughout.

TOWER
Aug 66-Jun 67
4 issues

1-4.

DWC

E-MAN

Probably the best of Charlton's attempts at superheroes, E-Man was an intelligent, if naive, energy being who came to earth and became a kind of cosmic Plastic Man. Nic Cuti's writing remained witty without cheapening the concept and Joe Staton's art was well suited to the character. The back up strips were varied and entertaining reading, particularly Killjoy by Steve Ditko (2 and 4) and of course John Byrne's robotic hero Rog 2000 in 6,7,9 and 10. The run of E-Man is a delightful read and is highly recommended. E-Man also appeared in issue 4 of Charlton Bullseye.

CHARLTON
Oct 73-Sep 75
10 issues

1-10.

DWC

ETERNALS

The conceptually incredible mind of Jack Kirby created the Eternals, a race of beings who were more than man, yet less than gods and had dwelt undiscovered on earth for centuries. With them came a mutant race known as the Deviants and the Celestials, who created all life on earth and returned to judge whether it was worthy of continued existence. A scripter working from Kirby's plots could have saved the Eternals, but unfortunately they failed due to Kirby's abysmal sense of pacing. Good representative issues are the annual and 11, but stay well away from 15-16, which feature the cosmic powered Hulk. Loose plotlines were tied up in Thor 283-300.

MARVEL
Jul 76-Jan 78
19 issues
1 Annual 77

FP

FANTASTIC FOUR

Unlike many of the other 60's titles, whose stories seem very crude now, the early FF's retain a certain innocent charm. 25,26 (the best Hulk/Thing battle), 32 and Annual 2 (the origin of Dr Doom) are the foremost of these. With 36 a great deal more sophistication came into the plotting; 36-67 is arguably the most consistently good period of the title, introducing the Frightful Four, Inhumans, Galactus, Silver Surfer, the Kree and Him (Warlock). 39 and 40 narrate (in my opinion) their best ever story,

MARVEL
From Nov 61
228 issues +
15 Annuals 63-
71,73,76-80.
6 GS May 74-Oct
75

36-51,57-67,129
-132,140-153,
155-178.
Annual 2,3.

with Daredevil leading a powerless FF back into the Baxter Building, which had been taken over by Dr Doom. The stories after 67 become distinctly mediocre and 94-104 are definitely to be avoided. With the departure of Stan Lee in 125, the book entered another strong period. 129-183 (by Roy Thomas and/or Gerry Conway), with only a few exceptions, are all above average; the really excellent issues are listed separately. It should be noted that 177-179 and 181-183 form a continued story. The first two issues are excellent, but this quality is not maintained to the end. 184+ have been consistent only in one respect: their inferiority. No author has been able to invent and capitalize upon any original plots or directions and all issues read like very poor imitations of what has gone before.

APS

FANTASY MASTERPIECES (1)

This reprint title featured mystery and science fiction strips. With 3 came Marvel's first Golden Age reprints; by the end of that run Captain America, Human Torch and Toro, the All Winners Squad, Sub-Mariner and the Black Knight (from the 50's) had been featured. No.1 has a full-length photo of Stan Lee as its contents page. The title became Marvel Superheroes with issue 12.

MARVEL

Feb 66-Oct 67
11 issues

SW

FANTASY MASTERPIECES (2)

48 pages per issue, this reprinted Silver Surfer 1-14 and issues 8 onwards included back up reprints of the Warlock-Magus epic from Strange Tales 178-181 and Warlock 9-11.

MARVEL

Dec 79-Jan 81
14 issues

APS

FEAR

Issues 1-9 reprint 50's weird/horror stories.

MARVEL

Nov 70-Dec 75
31 issues

Man-Thing 10-19

Ted Sallis, a chemist trying to recreate the super-soldier serum used on Captain America, found himself surrounded by traitors and enemies and thus fled into the Florida swamp waters to escape. In desperation he injected himself with the serum, but, this area having great affinity for magic in the Marvel Universe, the swamp waters combined with the serum to transmogrify him into a foul 7' tall walking mass of rotting vegetation. With no mind to speak of, Man-Thing reacts involuntarily to the emotions of those around him; fear being the one which causes him the most distress. Steve Gerber caught the feel of the strip from the word go. Every issue is good, with 18 being a masterpiece; a lesson in how to summarize the nature of the human race in 19 pages of comic. 19 introduced Howard the Duck, but the actual story (concluded in Man-Thing (1) 1), apart from the characterisation of Howard, is not that outstanding.

16-18.

APS

Morbius, the living vampire 20-31

Michael Morbius, a Nobel prize winning biochemist inflicted with a fatal blood disease, injected himself with an enzyme distilled from the blood of a vampire bat, whereupon he was semi-cured but acquired an irresistible craving for human blood. The main drawback the series suffers from is in trying to do too many things at once and thus vacillating between the occult, science fiction, detective and fantasy genres. This is largely due to a total lack of writer/editor continuity. Overall the series is mediocre despite several excellent plot twists.

JFG

FIRESTORM

Gerry Conway's reworking of *Nova*/Captain Marvel was never given the time to see if it could have developed beyond its derivative origin. Although Conway's writing captured the feelings of youthful exuberance in the super powered teenager well, Al Milgrom's art lacked its usual clarity and the title as a whole is just average superhero fare.

DWC

FIRST ISSUE SPECIAL

In this tryout mag DC revamped their Showcase format into a series of "first editions". There were 3 established characters in new strips - Metamorpho(3), Creeper(7) and a superb Dr Fate by Marty Pasko and Walt Simonson in 9. Of the new strips, 3 were by Jack Kirby. Atlas(1) and Manhunter(5) were forgettable, but the third was the much heralded Dingbats(6), the only kid strip attempted in the 70's. Apart from Mike Grell's Warlord(8) and the rather inferior *Return of the New Gods*(13) all the strips were failures.

SW

FIVE STAR SUPERHERO SPECTACULAR

This was intended as a series of dollar comics but only the single issue appeared. It contained individual stories of the Flash, Batman, Green Lantern, Atom and Aquaman. The best tale of a nice bunch was the Batman story by Pasko and Nasser, which concluded plotlines from the Kobra book.

FP

FLASH

Caught in an accident that combined chemicals and a bolt of lightning, Barry Allen developed super speed and reflexes and became the Flash. After four tryouts in Showcase (4,8,13,14) he moved into the comic vacated by his earth 2 predecessor. Since then, with only two periods of realism (185-210 and 270-284), the strip has remained basically the same: lots of clever super speed tricks, costumed villains, and ingenious traps; in other words, fun. The earlier sixties issues were characterised by clever Fox and Broome scripts and lovely Infantino art. Since issue 210 the book has been scripted by Cary Bates who, for all his shortcomings in characterisation and continuity, consistently produces intriguing plots that keep everyone guessing. Green Lantern appeared as back up in 217-221, 223, 224, 226-231, 233, 234, 237-243, 245 and 246. Firestorm has been regular back up since issues 289.

FP

THE FLY

Teenager Thomas Troy was given a ring by a representative of a race of fly people from another dimension. This ring enabled him to become the Fly, a winged superhero, once every 24 hours. The first four issues of this book were by Simon and Kirby and, as is usual with their pre-seventies work, they were good solid adventure stories that still make enjoyable reading. With their departure the title began a decline into lunatic

DC
Mar 78-Nov 78
5 issues

DC
Apr 75-Apr 76
13 issues

9.

DC
1977
1 issue (unnumbered)

1977 issue

DC
Jan 40-Mar 49 (104)
From Mar 59
295 issues +
2 Annuals 63,78

160,169,178,179,
187,196,205,216,
219,243,244,254-
264.

ARCHIE
Aug 59-Oct 64
30 issues

plots, inane scripts and bland art. The whole series is best summed up as a non-Marvel version of Not Brand Echh. With issue 31 the title changed to Flyman.

DWC

FLYMAN

Noticing the success of the realistic superheroes produced by Marvel, Archie revived and revamped a number of 1940's superheroes and altered their existing superhero line to fit the new "Mighty Comics" format. Thus the Fly became Flyman and Jerry Siegel began producing even sillier plots than he had been turning out previously. It would be kind to label these issues pathetic. With issue 40 the title changed yet again, to Mighty Comics Presents and it limed on for another 11 issues, starring various mighty heroes, before being cancelled.

MIGHTY
(31) May 65-Sep 66
39 issues

FP

FOREVER PEOPLE

This great comic was involved in Jack Kirby's New Genesis/Apokalips war. It featured young gods from New Genesis, Mark Moonrider, Beautiful Dreamer, Vyking the Black, Big Bear and Serifan, plus the mysterious Infinity Man combating Darkseid and his minions in earth-based adventures. Issue 1 offered a great character analysis of Superman. Issues 4-9 also reprinted golden age Sandman stories by Simon and Kirby. A comic not to be missed.

DC
Mar 71-Nov 72
11 issues

1-11.

HY

FOUR STAR SPECTACULAR

This giant sized reprint title featured nice superhero oldies, if nothing fantastic, though 1 had a re-drawn golden age Flash story.

DC
Apr 76-Feb 77
6 issues

HY

THE FOX AND THE CROW

Using characters from the Columbia cartoon films, this series changed the concept of the wily fox: the fox here was constantly outwitted by the wily crow. As funny animal comics go, this is great if one only reads a few issues, but it becomes samey after a while. Well worth sampling though. The title changed to Stanley and his Monster with 109 and it lasted a further 7 issues.

DC
Jan 52-Mar 68
108 issues

FP

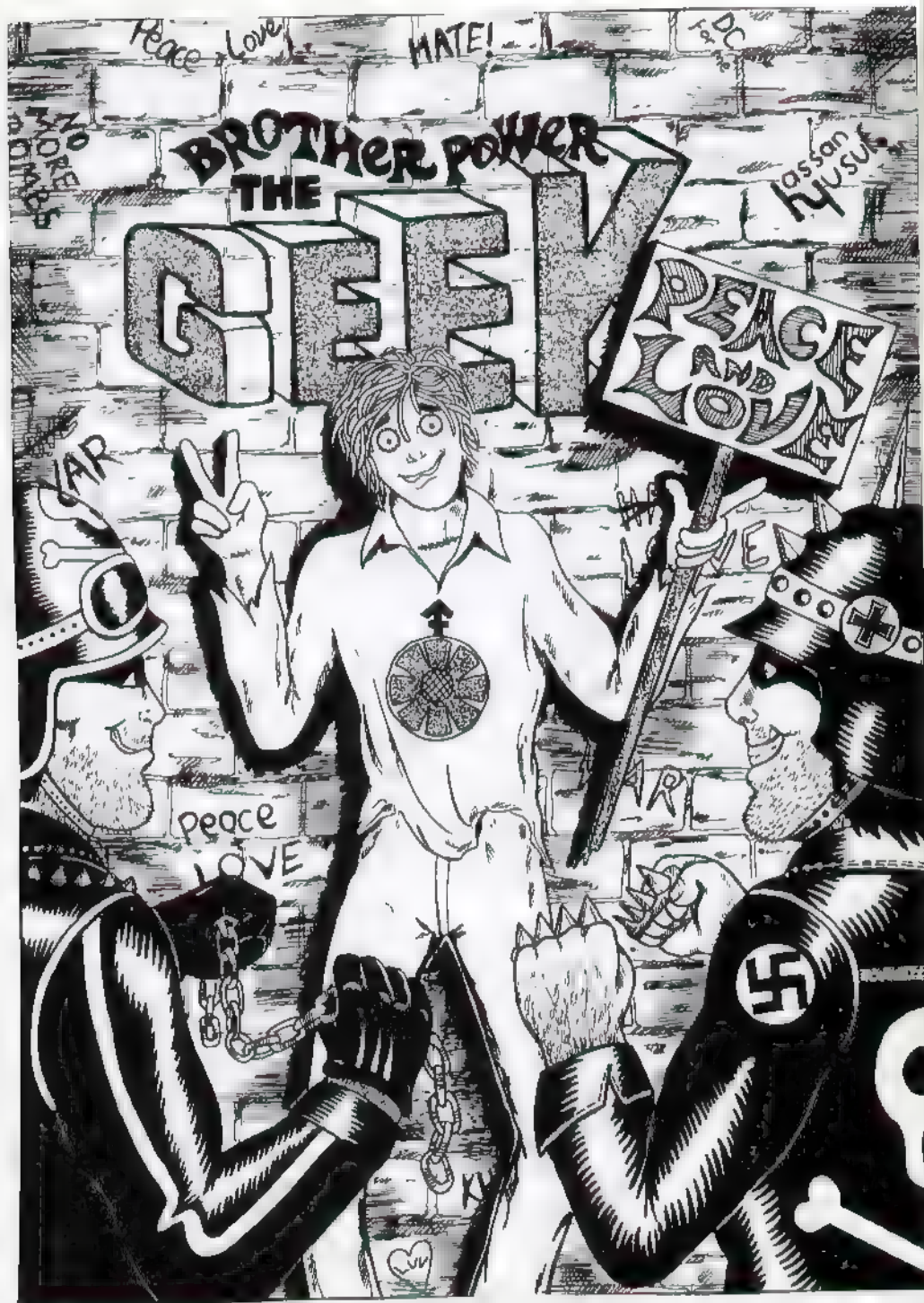
THE FRANKENSTEIN MONSTER

This series started very well, with an excellent adaptation of Mary Shelley's novel by Gary Friedrich and Mike Ploog, in 1 and 2. Successive issues didn't live up to the initial promise and the departure of Ploog with issue 6 really saw the book die. Doug Moench revived the monster in the present in issue 12, but he seemed to put little thought into his writing and the eventual cancellation was a blessing. The quality of the book is mirrored by the title of the letters page: "Let's be Frank."

MARVEL
Jan 73-Sep 75
18 issues

1,2.

FP



FREEDOM FIGHTERS

The Freedom Fighters were a group of characters that DC had acquired from the defunct Quality group. They were first banded together in JLA 107, where it was revealed that their homeworld had been overrun by Nazis. Due to the profusion of alternate earths at DC they were moved to Earth 1 for their own series, where they soon became hunted by the law. The scripting fell to Bob Rozakis, who (intentionally?) seemed to aim it at the younger audience, using ludicrous villains and tired plots. Apart from the superb issue 12 the promise of some great characters was never realised here.

DC
Apr 77-Aug 78
15 issues

1-3, 12.

FP

FRIGHT

The only issue of this title featured the wonderfully original "Son of Dracula", whose secret identity was Mr A. Lucard (read it backwards). Frank Thorne art couldn't save a trashy script. Avoid it.

ATLAS
June 75
1 issue

FP

THE GEEK

This comic is regarded as a joke, even by the DC staff. Created, written and drawn by Joe Simon (the man who gave you Captain America) the Geek was a tailor's dummy brought to life and given super strength by a bolt of lightning. He befriended a group of hippies and helped them further the cause of "peace, love and flower power" through a number of misadventures.

DC
Oct 68-Dec 68
2 issues

1, 2.

HY

GHOST RIDER (1)

The original Ghost Rider was a western hero who dressed in white and coated his clothes and horse with "a phosphorescent substance" to give the appearance of a ghost. Some nice Dick Ayers art but, apart from his gimmicky appearance the Ghost Rider was as ordinary as most Marvel western heroes. His adventures were later picked up in Western Gunfighters.

MARVEL
Feb 67-Nov 67
7 issues

FP

GHOST RIDER (2)

Johnny Blaze made a pact with Satan and gained his hellfire powers. A tremendously visual character with his flaming cycle and blazing skull, the Ghost Rider's stories have always been less than impressive. As a whole the series has been totally directionless since since the first few issues and has dumbfounded everyone by not only remaining on sale, but also going monthly recently. The only issue that rises above the usual twaddle is 35, which features a cross-country cycle race against Death, written and laid out by Jim Starlin.

MARVEL
From Sep 73
54 issues +

FP

GHOSTS

For a long time this comic actually adapted true "Tales of the Weird and Supernatural" but they were no better than the average horror story. There have been some nice tales and good art, but you'll have to look around. Recent issues have been more interesting though. A series starring Dr 13, the Ghost Breaker, began in 95 and has guest-starred the Spectre from 97.

DC
From Oct 71
98 issues +
1 Special 77

HY

GIANT-SIZE CHILLERS (2)

The first series was titled Giant-Size Dracula from 2 on; this second series was one of only two Giant-Size titles not to have a parent book. It mainly featured 50's weird/horror reprints, except for 3 which had some more recent reprints with art by Smith and Wrightson.

MARVEL
Feb 75-Aug 75
3 issues

AP

GIANT-SIZE SUPERHEROES

This was the second of Marvel's Giant-Size line and was slightly shorter than later books, which sold for 15c more. It contained a Conway/Kane tale in which Spiderman fights Morbius and Man-Wolf. Also included are "The Gallery of Spiderman's Famous Foes" from early annuals.

MARVEL
June 74
1 issue

FP

GI COMBAT

This title was another inherited from Quality. Since 87 the main series has been The Haunted Tank. The tank is haunted by a civil war general who is the ancestor of one of the crew. Despite this occult suggestion it has always been a well written series by top war writer Robert Kanigher complemented by good art from Sam Glazman. Kanigher always manages to make the stories interesting and adds a touch of realism by showing the misery of war. Since 201 this has been a Dollar Comic.

DC
(44) From Jan 57
227 issues +

HY

GODZILLA

Doug Moench handled this attempt at the famed "king of monsters" with his usual competence, but the title never developed beyond its "see who Godzilla's gonna stomp this issue" idea. Characterisation was supplied by a large supporting cast, including most of Shield, but the book was rather aimless and is very juvenile reading, although I suppose that was what was intended.

MARVEL
Aug 77-Jul 79
24 issues

DWC

GREEN LANTERN

After a successful series in Showcase, DC's most cosmic superhero was given his own comic. Although most of the earlier stories were never really powerful or exciting, they were well handled by Gardner Fox and John Broome with artist Gil Kane. They never fell short of ideas or super villains and GL was always entering different worlds, times and dimensions. Towards the mid 60's the stories

DC
Aug 60-May 72 (89)
From Sep 76
138 issues +

45, 52, 63, 76-87, 89,
91-93.

improved, reflecting more super heroics, especially when the Earth 2 Green Lantern was on hand.

Issues 76-87 and 89 featured the much acclaimed Green Lantern/Green Arrow series by Denny O'Neil and Neal Adams. This was an absolutely superb series which brought relevance to comics and dealt directly or indirectly with such social problems as racism, corruption, pollution and over population. The two part drug saga in 85-86, wherein Green Arrow's ward, Speedy, became a drug addict, must be singled out as a comic book milestone. Unfortunately GL's ring was unable to stave off cancellation with 89, but the series continued as a back up feature in the Flash comic.

When the comic was revived in 1976 the stories were pure superhero adventures, still starring Green Arrow and sometimes Black Canary. They ranged from very good to mundane stuff from O'Neil and artists Mike Grell and Alex Saviuk. Green Arrow was phased out with 122 and Green Lantern's adventures have been steadily improving, with interesting developments by Marv Wolfman lately. Back ups have included the Earth 2 Green Lantern in 108-110 and Adam Strange from 132.

HY

GRIM GHOST

The Grim Ghost was a 17th century highwayman who went to hell after being hung. Satan offered him the opportunity to return to earth, provided that he kept up a supply of evil souls flowing to hell. He was then given a flying horse and sundry abilities and despatched to 20th century earth. If one doesn't question Satan's logic too much, Fleisher and Colon produced a nice series here.

FP

ATLAS

Jan 75-Jul 75
3 issues

1-3.

GUNHAWKS

This book starred Reno Jones and Kid Cassidy and is obviously not one of Marvel's subtler plagiarisms. It's a western book that is only of interest for being the second book to use a black protagonist.

MARVEL

Oct 72-Oct 73
7 issues

FP

HANDS OF THE DRAGON

Every comic company attempted to cash in on a contemporary fad with a kung-fu comic and Atlas were only different in that their effort was far worse than anybody elses. Like all good kung-fu heroes, the Dragon learned his skill in a remote Tibetan monastery and, aided by a mystic medallion, he searched for his evil twin in the USA.

ATLAS

June 75
1 issue

FP

THE HAWK AND THE DOVE

A mysterious voice gave Hank and Don Hall heightened physical prowess and costumes that magically appeared whenever their owners were in danger. Their opposing views on violence determined the superheroes they became - the angry Hawk and the pacifist Dove. Bearing the distinctive stamp of Steve Ditko, the strip is enhanced by the scripting of Steve Skeates. Only the first two issues and the strip's debut in Showcase 75 are drawn by Ditko. Gil Kane worked on later issues, but failed to match Ditko's intensity.

DC

Sep 68-Jul 69
6 issues

1,2.

SW

HAWKMAN

Katar and Shayera Hol, winged police officers from the planet Thanagar, continued their battle with injustice here on earth. Gardner Fox and Murphy Anderson's slick and consistent stories make any of the first 21 issues of the title a treat to read. Sadly the last six issues before Hawkman's forced merger with the Atom's comic have nothing to recommend them except 27's lovely Kubert cover.

SW

DC
May 64-Sep 68
27 issues

1-21.

THE HEAP

This one shot publication starred a test pilot who was turned into a "manthing" after falling into the usual chemical vat. Tom Sutton turned out an excellent story which compares very favourably with the similar Marvel and DC concepts and captures well the man as monster notion which abounded in the early 70's.

DWC

SKYWALD
Sept 71
1 issue

1.

HERCULES UNBOUND

Breaking free of the chains that had bound him to a cliff for 1000 years, Hercules stepped into 1986 and a world that was being devastated by a nuclear war, fanned by Ares. After defeating Ares, Hercules and his companions wandered around the ruined earth encountering various unusual people, including the Atomic Knights in 10 and 11. This began as that rarity, a good Conway series, and David Michelinie and later Cary Bates, continued the quality and used the series to tie up lots of loose ends in DC continuity. The series was also properly ended prior to cancellation.

FP

DC
Nov 75-Sep 77
12 issues

1-12.

HOT WHEELS

There were quite a few "Hot car" type mags around in the mid 60's (you can almost see the Beach Boys reading them in their little deuce coupes) and although this was a little later, it was undoubtedly the best. Scripts were by Joe Gill and a fledgling Len Wein among others, and artists included Alex Toth and Neal Adams.

SW

DC
Apr 70-Feb 71
6 issues

HOUSE OF MYSTERY

This started off as a mystery comic and it changed format in the mid 60's to feature the Martian Manhunter (143-173) and Dial H for Hero (156-173). To my mind the better was Dial H for Hero; you got well plotted, fun stories, three new (albeit sometimes ridiculous) heroes per issue and some nice Jim Mooney art. With 174 the mystery format was re-adopted and, although some notable artists have appeared here, the stories are repetative and boring.

FP

DC
From Jan 52
290 issues +

HOUSE OF SECRETS

Standard horror fare from DC which has had the occasional artistic highspots, eg 87, 92 (the 1st Swamp Thing tale), and 94 by Wrightson, 82 and 90 by Adams and 98 by Kaluta. In the main though, apart from tales of Mark Merlin, Prince Ra-Man

DC
Dec 56-Oct 66 (80)
Sep 69-Mar 76 (140)
Sep 76-Nov 78
154 issues



and Eclipse in the mid 60's, the book has run the usual O. Henry tales with a great reliance on Spanish artists. 140 starred the Patchwork Man.

DWC

HOUSE OF YANG

Joe Gill scripted Charlton's only spin off title (from Yang), which featured the adventures of a Chinese kung-fu character. The idea was more interesting than the result, but it is a good example of Charlton's willingness to experiment. Neither the stories nor the art, by Sanho Kim, were up to much and the title is very lacklustre.

DWC

HOWARD THE DUCK

Steve Gerber's most controversial creation was one of those characters who was intended to push the medium forward, like Swamp Thing or Warlock, or to drown comics in an intellectual bog, like Killraven, and therein lies the controversy. Early issues managed a nice mixture of parody and social comment, but as the book progressed it began to suffer from Gerber's outraged intellectual morals, as seen in the Soofi anti-anti homosexual stories (20,21) and extended aimless plotting, such as the Dr Bong storyline. Gene Colan was the longest serving artist and did a good job, as did Val Mayerik on issues 22 and 23, a great satire on Star Wars. Bill Mantlo took over the book with 30 but didn't have much time to show how badly suited he was to the character before the book was cancelled.

DWC

HULK

The first 6 issues are very superficial; they are interesting only for the Hulk's relationship with Rick Jones and because of the ever changing conditions which caused Bruce Banner to change to the Hulk and back. The numbering of the 2nd series continues from Tales to Astonish. The problem with writing the Hulk is the lack of opportunity for characterisation. It must be very difficult to develop character in a creature with the intellect of half a moron; every writer has come up with a few reasonable ideas initially and then petered out of good ideas. Thus 103-108 (Gary Friedrich) and 122-132 (Roy Thomas) are passable and 140 and Avengers 88 (Harlan Ellison and the introduction of Jarella) are worth reading, as is the following Jarella story in 148. The book's best period was 163-182, by Steve Englehart and then Thomas or Gerry Conway, which are all at least average. All the rest to date are mediocre (or worse) with the exception of one brief flash of inspiration from Roger Stern in 222-229.

APB

HUMAN FLY

Bill Mantlo wrote this series about a stuntman who actually exists. Despite this solid basis for a series, it failed due to the fact that readers used to seeing superheroes doing

CHARLTON

Jul 75-Jul 76
6 issues

MARVEL

Jan 76-May 79
31 issues
1 Annual 97

1-7, 22-24,
Annual 1

MARVEL

May 62-Mar 63
6 issues
(102) From Mar 68
257 issues +
9 Annuals 68, 69,
71, 72, 76-80.
1 GS 75

163-170, 176-178,
182, Annual 7.

MARVEL

Sep 77-Mar 79
19 issues

anything didn't want to read about a guy who walked tightropes and rescued children every month. Poor art by Frank Robbins and Lee Elias didn't help either. Avoid.

FP

HUMAN TORCH

This series reprinted the first 8 Torch stories from Strange Tales backed up by 5-8 page reprints of golden age Human Torch stories.

MARVEL

Sep 74-Nov 75
8 issues

APS

INFERIOR 5

After three issues in Showcase (62,63,65), DC's superhero parody group gained their own comic. E.Nelson Bridwell wrote amusing stories starring the team - Merryman, Dumb Bunny, White Feather, The Blimp and Awkwardman - and introduced character parodies of the Justice League (re-named the Freedom Brigade), Tarzan (Darwin of the Apes), the DC staff, Man from U.N.C.L.E. (O.O.U.S.I.N. F.R.E.D.) and, naturally various Marvel superheroes. Do the Cobweb Kid, Sub-Moron, the Kookie Quartet or Thor of Vallhallabaloo remind you of anybody? Issues 11 and 12 reprinted two Showcase stories featuring the Inferior 5. Worth getting, because at times this series made you laugh out loud.

DC

Apr 67-Oct 68 (10)
Sep 72-Nov 72
12 issues

1-12.

HY

INHUMANS

This was Marvel's second attempt at giving the Fantastic Four's guest stars their own book and it was started in a very strong fashion with Doug Moench writing and George Perez on art. Moench used the cast of characters well and introduced good sub plots, which gave the book an interesting depth. Gil Kane did the art in 5-7 with Perez back for 8 but after that the series became stale and was soon cancelled; the plotlines were tied up in Captain Marvel 53 and FF Annual 12.

MARVEL

Oct 75-Aug 77
12 issues

1-8.

DWC

INVADERS

This was Roy Thomas's labour of love, in which he recreated the golden age All Winners Squad in all but name. The series began with a giant size origin, but converted to a standard size comic with its second issue (which was also numbered as 1). The first 30 issues were a delight, as Thomas weaved plots around the Invaders and other golden age characters, culminating in the Battle for Berlin (16-21). Frank Robbins was artist until 29 and he was well suited to create the right look for the era in which the stories were set, but his departure saw the book go into a period of decline. From issue 30 there was an apparent loss of interest by Thomas and the last dozen issues were marred by a glut of reprints and fill-ins and the attendant loss of continuity. A special mention should be made of the 1977 Invaders annual, which tied up the inconsistencies in the Avengers WWII battle with the then unnamed Invaders (Avengers 71) and is one of Thomas's best tales.

MARVEL

Aug 75-Sep 79
41 issues
1 Annual 77
1 GS June 75

12,13,GS 1,Annual
1.

DWC

IRON FIST

On being transferred to his own book, Iron Fist underwent a remarkable change in production. Although it took 5 writers and 6 artists to produce his 11 issues in Marvel Premiere, it needed but one of each - Chris Claremont and John Byrne - to create the 15 issues here. Claremont wrote the last 2 Premiere issues and these, together with Iron Fist 1-7 form a continuing storyline. 5-7 are extremely good, but a lot of unnecessary sidetracking occurs in 2-4, which detracts from the story. Thereafter the book moves from strength to strength and the plotlines left hanging in 15 are resolved in Marvel Team-Up 63 and 64. Readers are warned that this is a typical Claremont book; there are so many subplots that the whole series reads like a continued story and you really need every issue (including the 11 Premiere and 2 Team-Up ones) to be able to appreciate everything. With the title's cancellation Iron Fist became permanent co-star in Power Man's comic.

APS

IRON JAW

Formerly a minstrel, Iron Jaw's original jaw was removed by a jealous admirer of his talents and it was replaced with the iron jaw by a witch. The jaw distinguished him from other barbarians and produced a nice series by Mike Fleisher and Pablo Marcos, although Gary Friedrich wrote the origin tale and Mike Sekowsky illustrated the first issue.

ATLAS
Jan 75-Jul 75
4 issues

1-4.

FP

IRON MAN

The first 42 issues of this title carried on in much the same way as the series in Tales of Suspense, with mundane scripts from Goodwin, Brodsky and Conway. It was Gary Friedrich who put some life back into the strip in 45, 46, work initially continued by Mike Friedrich, who set the scene for the Thanos series in Captain Marvel with the first appearances of Moondragon and the Destroyer in 54 and 55. Neither was particularly well done though. Steve Gerber produced a fine two parter in 57 and 58 (his only Iron Man story apart from the excellent Annual 3) before Mike Friedrich took over again, and began the war of super-villains multi part epic. Despite being interrupted by fill-ins and reprints and let down by a badly plotted conclusion, this was, until recently, the best continued tale in Iron Man. After that the book fell back into the same old rut and apart from a two part story by Herb Trimpe (93-94) and a Bill Mantlo tale in 103-108, nothing very good appeared. With the arrival of John Romita Jr on the art in 115 and David Michelinie and Bob Layton as plotters in 116 the potential of Iron Man and his alter ego Tony Stark was finally realised and utilised. The last three years have produced an excellent tale in almost every issue, including an Eagle award winner for best single issue (128) and, to my mind, the best ever Hulk story in 131 and 132.

MARVEL
From May 68
144 issues +
4 Annals 70, 71,
76, 77.
1 GS 75

57, 58, 68-71, 74, 75,
77, 93, 94, 115-121,
123-128, 131-144.
Annual 3.

FP

IRON MAN AND SUB-MARINER

This comic bridged the gap between Tales to Astonish 101 and Sub-Mariner 1 and did the same for Tales of Suspense 99 and Iron Man 1.

MARVEL
April 68
1 issue

SWC

ISIS

Professor Andrea Thomas, with the aid of a magic parchment, transformed herself into the Egyptian goddess Isis - nemesis of evil. An entirely forgettable comic based on a TV series with cardboard scripts by Jack Harris.

DC
Nov 76-Jan 78
8 issues

SW

JIMMY OLSEN

This comic associates itself with all the great, simple, light-hearted stories that run throughout the Superman range of comics edited by Mort Weisinger in the 1960's. Each issue offered 2 or 3 stories and they were always extremely entertaining. Most of them involved Jimmy disguising himself in various roles to obtain scoops for the Daily Planet, his on-off romance with Lucy Lane, turning into weird creatures, gaining super powers etc. A few stories in the early 1970's had a more serious tone to them, eg 127, which dealt with slums. It also received the largest amount of letters ever for a comic at the time.

A drastic change came to the comic when Jack Kirby took over with 133. Kirby placed the book within his amazing New Genesis/Apokalips war, revived the Golden Guardian and the Newsboy Legion from the 40's, and introduced other amazing concepts. Even though Olsen himself took a back seat in these stories, they still stand out. After Kirby left the series started to decline slowly. There was an attempt to get the flavour of the 1960's stories, but it failed. The comic eventually became the Superman Family.

DC
Oct 54-Mar 74
163 issues

127,133-139,141-
148.

HY

JOHN CARTER

Of Marvel's two books using the creations of Edgar Rice-Burroughs this was by far the better. Marv Wolfman and Chris Claremont set their tales in a 12 year gap in the chronology of the original books and all are good, with Claremont's 12 part "Master Assassin of Mars" tale (16-27) standing out in particular.

MARVEL
Jun 77-Oct 79
28 issues
3 Annuals 77,78,
79.

FP

JOHNNY THUNDER

The presence of 50's western stars Nighthawk and the Trigger Twins, as well as Johnny himself, didn't save this reprint mag from being cancelled after just 3 issues. Unless you spurn western comics without exception, this is worth your attention.

DC
Mar 73-Aug 73
3 issues

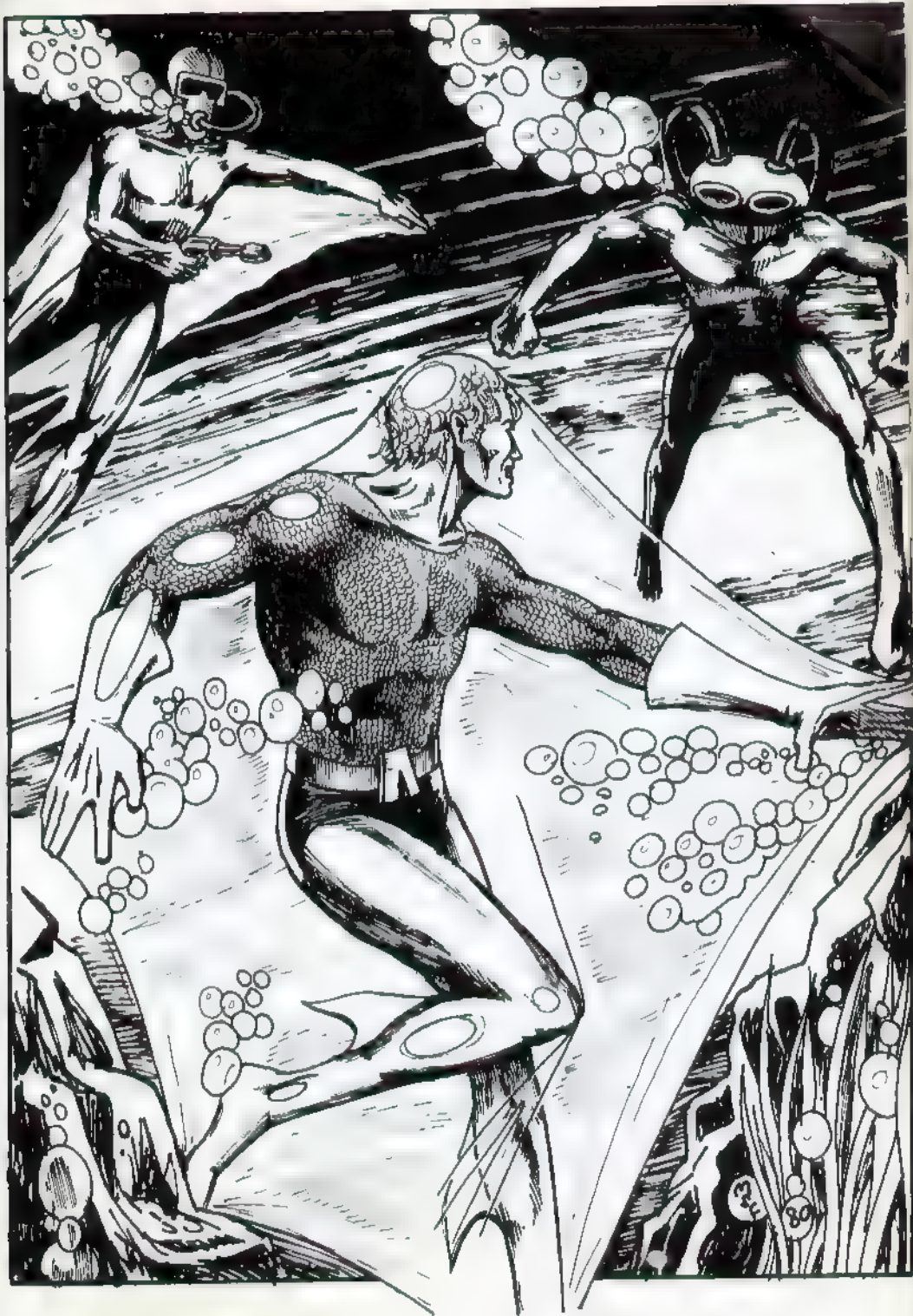
SW

JOKER

If the character inconsistencies in the Joker appearing here are marked down to his madness, this becomes a nice, if somewhat bizarre, series. Scripts were by O'Neil, Pasko and Maggin and the art mainly by Irv Novick. Most stories also starred another hero or villain, the best being the appearance of the Creeper in issue 3.

DC
May 75-Oct 76
9 issues

FP



JONAH HEX

The first 15 issues of this comic by Mike Fleisher (1-12) and David Michelinie are nothing short of excellent and although succeeding issues have occasionally fallen below these high standards, this has been DC's most consistently good series over the past four years. Good issues include Jonah's origin in issues 8 and 9, his death in the 1978 Spectacular (which also included a new Batlash tale), a lovely flashback tale in 27 and a recent three parter in 42-44.

DC

From Apr 77
46 issues +
Spectacular 78

1-15, 18, 24, 27-33,
40, 42-44.
Spectacular

FP

JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY (1)

Thor 83-125

In his 44 all-Lee-created run in Journey Into Mystery, Thor spent most of his time battling Loki and remonstrating with Odin who would not let him reveal his love for Jane Foster, as she was mortal. The early issues seem very antiquated now, but the latter 10 (116-125) are worth reading. Other good issues are 107 (the first Grey Gargoyle) and 114-115 (the first Absorbing Man). The best two are, undoubtedly, 110 and 111, featuring Cobra and Mr Hyde, two of Thor's better early villains.

MARVEL

Jun 52-Aug 57(48)
Nov 58-Feb 66
125 issues
1 Annual 65

110, 111.

Tales of Asgard 97-125

This ran from 97 and was a series of 5 page back up stories. They introduced and featured many characters in the Norse pantheon and their enemies, usually set in Thor's boyhood. See Thor from 126.

APS

JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY (2)

This was Marvel's last attempt to provide new mystery tales in the colour comic format. It only lasted 5 issues before switching to the usual fifties reprint tales.

MARVEL

Oct 72-Oct 75
19 issues

FP

JUNGLE ACTION

The first 4 issues reprinted Jann of the Jungle and Lorna the Jungle Girl, and the 5th, Avengers 62. With issue 6 the Black Panther strip took over the book and Don McGregor began his epic "Panther's Rage" series, in which the Panther returned to his homeland to face a revolution led by the imposing Eric Killmonger. This tale ran until issue 18, taking the Panther all over his kingdom, Wakanda, portraying him with an exceptional realism and was one of Marvel's finest continued stories. Issue 19 saw the Panther back in the States and a story in which he fought the Klu Klux Klan. Sadly it was overwritten and, at times, boring. The story was unfinished with the title's cancellation, and was concluded, none too satisfactorily by Ed Hannigan in Marvel Premiere 51-53.

MARVEL

Oct 72-Nov 76
24 issues

6-18.

FP

JUSTICE INC

Using characters from the pulp novels of Kenneth Robeson, Justice Inc related new tales and adapted some originals. The book was set in the 30's and starred a bunch of crimefighters

DC

Jun 75-Dec 75
4 issues

led by the ashen-faced Avenger. Although it remained true to the feel of the pulps and despite the presence of Denny O'Neil and Jack Kirby, Justice Inc wasn't any more than average.

FF

JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA

The first 65 issues of the JLA - the first silver age supergroup - were cleverly plotted and written by Gardner Fox with art by Mike Sekowsky until 63. The basic format in the earlier issues had the members dividing into groups in order to defeat simultaneous threats provided by their adversaries. Fox kept the stories interesting, although the heroes lacked characterisation. The traditional annual team-up with Earth 2's Justice Society of America first took place in 21-22 and really stood out.

A new direction was initiated when Denny O'Neil (scripts 66-83) took over and shook up the complacency of the JLA. As well as producing good stories, he gave the heroes individual personalities, Green Arrow being the most drastically altered. O'Neil introduced an awareness of social problems which were later touched upon many a time by writer Mike Friedrich (86-99). His better stories though were pure adventure, eg 94 and the Starbreaker drama in 96-98.

Len Wein produced a successful run of super hero adventures with excellent characterisation in 100-114 and as well as adding new members he brought back old characters such as the Seven Soldiers of Victory and the Freedom Fighters in his JLA/JSA team-ups. The comic went through an uneasy patch, with a variety of scripters, from 115-138 but was revived by Steve Englehart, who wrote 139-146 and 149-150 and produced the best run of stories seen here. He further developed the characters and introduced Marvel-like concepts never before attempted in the title. Since then things have been a little dull, but from 184 George Perez (who took over from Dick Dillin, artist for all but two issues from 64) has given the book a new artistic life.

HY

KAMANDI

This was Jack Kirby's most successful series for DC. It went one better than Planet of the Apes and gave all animals intelligence. The stories all contained the type of way out concepts that have been associated with Kirby. The basic plot had Kamandi, the last boy on earth after the Great Disaster, and his mutant and animal friends travelling around the world and encountering different mutated animal species. Kirby left the series at 40 and the tradition was only adequately handled until Jack C. Harris took over with 52 and produced the series' pinnacle. Harris's writing was surprisingly competent and he even introduced a subtle humour to the series in the form of dog versions of Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson. The comic was cancelled in the DC implosion and was one of the sadder losses.

HY

KARATE KID

The martial arts expert from the Legion of Super-Heroes made it to the big time with his own comic set in the 20th century. The stories and the art weren't too impressive and Karate Kid was better off in the 30th century.

DC

From Nov 60
188 issues +

1-22, 29-31, 37, 38,
46, 47, 50, 51, 55-57,
59-61, 64-66, 68-75,
77-83, 91, 92, 96-98,
100-114, 135-137,
139-146, 149, 150,
183-185.

DC

Nov 72-Oct 78
59 issues

1-6, 12-16, 21-23, 26
-29, 47-59.

DC

Apr 76-Aug 78
15 issues

HY

KA-ZAR (1)

This decidedly singular mag featured lead reprint tales of the title character backed up by original 11 page stories of unconnected heroes. Ka-Zar, the Tarzan imitation living/ ruling in a prehistoric jungle hidden below sea level in Antarctica, had not had his own series before and so nearly all his previous appearances (from X-Men, Daredevil and Spider-Man) were reprinted here. The back ups were Hercules (1), concluded in Sub-Mariner 29 and the Angel (2 & 3), concluded in Marvel Tales 30. If you want to buy this title for the reprints, fine, but the back ups aren't worth it.

APS

MARVEL

Aug 70-Mar 71
3 issues

KA-ZAR (2)

Continuing directly from his run in Astonishing Tales, Ka-Zar is returned to the Savage Land after a lengthy spell of adventures set in New York. The book stumbled and faltered from the very beginning; as well as being crippled by the musical writers/artists syndrome, it suffered from having no subplots, no supporting characters, little issue to issue continuity and transparently thin characterisation. Not until 14 did this change; Doug Moench spent the previous four issues going nowhere until producing a commendable last seven issues. The story is literally cut off in midstream with the cancellation, but is concluded (none too satisfactorily) in X-Men 115.

APS

MARVEL

Jan 74-Mar 77
20 issues

KID COLT, OUTLAW

Another western hero, Kid Colt killed a man in self defence during his youth and then fled in panic, thus becoming an outlaw. This is really a case of "once you've read one, you've read them all"; the stories are full of every western cliché ever imagined, with special emphasis on dead shot bad guys who can't fire a single bullet straight when aiming at Kid Colt. With literally only a couple of exceptions, every issue from 140 on is a reprint of earlier material.

APS

MARVEL

Aug 48-Mar 68(139)
Nov 69-May 79
229 issues
3 GS Jan-Jul 75

KING CONAN

These giant size adventures of the Cimmerian monarch, whose earlier life as a freebooting mercenary is featured in Conan the Barbarian, are based on Robert E. Howard's tales of Conan's later life. Here we find Roy Thomas and John Buscema producing the same high quality stuff that's made Conan's monthly comic such a success.

SW

MARVEL

Quarterly from
March 80
5 issues +

KOBRA

This was an interesting series about siamese twins who were surgically separated at birth. One twin grew up normally but the other, Kobra, became leader of the evil cult that raised him. Originated by Jack Kirby and carried through superbly by Martin Pasko, the plotline concentrated on the brothers opposing each other. The plotline was concluded in the Batman story in 5-Star Superhero Spectacular. Recommended.

HY

DC

Mar 76-Apr 77
7 issues

1-7.

KONG

In 1975 DC introduced a line of fantasy titles and along with them came Kong, a blond caveman. He represented an attempt by DC to upgrade the image of the boring old caveman stories that had appeared since comics began; however, despite some lovely art by Alfredo Alcala, the stories were every bit as boring as previous cavemen.

FP

DC
Jul 75-Mar 76
5 issues

KORAK

This title was inherited from Gold Key and continued their numbering. Under the guidance of Joe Kubert and Robert Kanigher, DC's son of Tarzan offered more than the usual jungle tales, sometimes entering the fantasy field. Excellent back ups included Pellucidar (in 46) and Carson of Venus (46-56) by Len Wein and Mike Kaluta. The comic became Tarzan Family with 57.

HY

DC
(46)Jun 72-Mar 74
56 issues

46-56.

KULL

Marvel hoped to repeat the phenomenal success of Conan by using another of Robert E. Howard's barbarian heroes. However Kull, a far more sombre and cerebral character, has never taken off in the same way, resisting three separate attempts to convert him to the colour comics format. Barbarian fans might like the comic, but the uninitiated should try Conan first, since, apart from some nice John and Marie Severin art in early issues, there's not much to recommend this. The title changes from Kull the Conqueror to Kull the Destroyer with issue 11.

FP

MARVEL
Jun 71-Sep 71 (2)
Jul 72-Aug 74 (15)
Aug 76-Oct 78
29 issues

KUNG FU FIGHTER

DC entered the kung-fu fad far too late to make any good impression. The book got off to a reasonable start with fairly decent stories and art, but rapidly declined into mediocrity, with Denny O'Neil and Ric Estrada at their worst.

HY

DC
May 75-Dec 77
18 issues

LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES (1)

This reprinted some of the great Legion tales from Adventure (328,333,340-341) and Tommy Tomorrow back ups. It was a trial run to see if the Legion deserved their own comic again. They did.

HY

DC
Feb 73-Jun 73
4 issues

LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES (2)

This series (which carries on the numbering from the old Superboy and the LSH comic) has so far been an insult to the Legion and Legion fans. The stories and art (with the exception of 262 by Jim Sherman) really stink. While waiting for a decent story, pick up any of the old stories in Adventure.

HY

DC
(259)From Jan 80
273 issues +

262.



LOGAN'S RUN

A close adaptation of the movie which was started by Gerry Conway but completed by Dave Kraft (2-5) with art by George Perez. The plot remained faithful to the film and is one of the best adaptations ever done in comics, with a good tight script and some of Perez's best art. With issue 6 a new team of John Warner and Tom Sutton took over the book, but before they could get into their stride the book was cancelled for contractual reasons.

DWC

MARVEL

Jan 77-Jul 77

7 issues

1-5.

LOIS LANE

The stories from the early to mid sixties were the sort of stuff associated with all the Superman related comics at the time - all pure, simple, light-hearted fun, showing Lois' rivalry with Lana Lang for Superman's love and attempting to discover Superman's secret identity. Towards the end of the sixties some stories became more serious. There was a nice period of relevance from 105-124 and the series was incorporated into Jack Kirby's New Gods trilogy and was also connected to the Rose and Thorn back up strip. Other interesting developments included the apparent death of Lucy Lane, Lois' sister, and issue 121 which had Lois leaving the Daily Planet staff and is probably the best LL tale ever written. Strangely though, this great direction was never developed and the book soon declined into mediocrity, with some really ridiculous stories. The comic was eventually cancelled, with the strip moving into Superman Family.

HY

DC

Apr 58-Feb 74

136 issues

106,110,111,115,
118-121.

MACHINE MAN

Machine Man was created by Jack Kirby in the last few issues of 2001 and was given his own title when 2001 was cancelled. As is usual with much of Kirby's later work for Marvel, the character was a good idea, but suffered from pedestrian treatment and was cancelled. After a short time the character was revived under Mary Wollman and Steve Ditko, who did a creditable job with some whimsical stories and gave the book a nice early sixties feel. With issue 15 Tom DeFalco took over the writing, continued the offbeat look and injected some sly humour into the character. Although never outstanding, the last ten issues make for relaxing reading.

DWC

MARVEL

Apr 78-Dec 78 (9)

AUG 79-Feb 81

19 issues

MAGNUS, ROBOT FIGHTER

Magnus deals with renegade robots in an otherwise idyllic fortieth century. The art by Russ Manning (better known for the Tarzan newspaper strip) makes each issue bearable, but the plots fall a bit flat. Manning also did the Aliens back up feature. From 29 on issues were all reprint.

SW

GOLD KEY

Feb 63-Jan 77

46 issues

MAN-BAT

After a few successful appearances in Batman and Detective, Kirk Langstrom, user of a serum that transformed him into a human bat, was given his own series. The first issue by Conway and Ditko was bad. The second by Pasko and Marcos

DC

Jan 76-Mar 76

2 issues

2.

was very good, but for the best Man-Bat stories see the Batman Family. 11

MAN FROM ATLANTIS

Developed from a none too interesting TV series of the same name, this concerned a man who could breathe underwater and was allegedly from Atlantis. Marvel created some new stories and adapted some, but the creative team of Bill Mantlo and Frank Robbins didn't seem to have much commitment or inspiration and the book was cancelled shortly after the TV series. Issue 1 was Marvel's first (and to date, only) attempt at a regular format book priced at a dollar.

MARVEL
Feb 78-Aug 78
7 issues

FP

MAN-THING (1)

Continuing directly from the Fear issues, Steve Gerber expanded on his scripting here to experiment with weirder and more outrageous ideas. Being as it is impossible to characterize Man-Thing himself, Gerber's (successful) line of attack was to give personality and depth to the supporting characters and then examine how Man-Thing reacted to their actions and, specifically, emotions. The strip's suitability for either straight superhero, science fantasy or human nature was a great asset; some issues failed, but this was inevitable as he was always trying out more and more offbeat storylines. Giant Size 4 and 5 are best remembered for the first two solo Howard the Duck stories; in the case of issue 4 this is a virtual travesty of justice as words are completely inadequate to describe the magnificent Man-Thing lead story.

MARVEL
Jan 74-Nov 75
22 issues
5 GS Aug 74-Oct 75.

2-6, 11, 16-18, GS1-5.

APS

MAN-THING (2)

Mike Fleisher wrote the first 3 issues as if he didn't care about the strip at all. Chris Claremont took over and has not quite come to terms with the series yet. Although, like Steve Gerber in the first series, he is also concentrating on supporting characters and Man-Thing's reactions to them, he has not really succeeded. This seems to be because, whereas Man-Thing was an indispensable part of Gerber's scripts, Claremont's issues give the feel that they could easily be rewritten with very few modifications so as to exclude him entirely. Issue 9 is worth the price for the cover alone.

MARVEL
From Nov 79
9 issues +

APS

MARVEL ADVENTURE

This reprints six issues of Daredevil numbered in the twenties.

MARVEL
Dec 75-Oct 76
6 issues

APS

MARVEL CHILLERS

Modred the Mystic, an apprentice of Merlin set in suspended animation until the 20th century, starred in the first two issues and is best forgotten. 3-7 featured Tigra, originally the Cat (Greer Nelson) but transformed, quite literally this time, into a cat-person in Giant Size Creatures 1. Although 4 was a fill-in, the others by Isabella and Shooter evinced a strong, solid plotline,

MARVEL
Oct 75-Oct 76
7 issues

3, 5-7.

complemented by an excellent portrayal of Tigra's attempts to come to terms with her two different personalities.

APS

MARVEL COLLECTORS' ITEM CLASSICS

This reprint title contains Fantastic Four, more or less from the beginning, Hulk (first series) and also Iron Man and Dr Strange from where their strips began in Tales of Suspense and Strange Tales respectively. The title changed to Marvel's Greatest Comics with 23.

MARVEL
1965 (1)
Apr 66-Aug 69
22 issues

APS

MARVEL DOUBLE FEATURE

This reprints the Iron Man and Captain America stories from the latter 20 odd issues of Tales of Suspense.

MARVEL
Dec 73-Mar 77
21 issues

APS

MARVEL FEATURE (1)

Another of Marvel's tryout comics, the first 2 issues were 48 pages and 1 had a Dr Strange back up story in which he returned to his role as a sorcerer after having abandoned it in Hulk 126. The lead features in 1-3 however, were the first 3 appearances of the Defenders (Hulk, Sub-Mariner and Dr Strange) by Roy Thomas and Ross Andru, 2 easily being the best. 4-10 featured Ant-Man in a very strange solo series. Written by Mike Friedrich, there were some original ideas overall, such as having Hank Pym retrospectively narrate the whole series in the first person. Unfortunately, nearly all of the individual stories were quite unbelievable, having concepts, plots and dialogue that would insult the intelligence of a 7 year old. 11 & 12 were the first 2 Thing team-up stories, both drawn by Jim Starlin, 12 being yet another corollary of the Thanos War.

MARVEL
Dec 71-Nov 73
12 issues

2.

APS

MARVEL FEATURE (2)

First introduced as a supporting character in Conan, Red Sonja's popularity won her her own colour series. As a young girl, she was transformed into a warrior by a goddess after her home and family had been pillaged and slain and she herself raped. The goddess enforced a condition that she could allow no man to love her unless he had defeated her in fair combat. Written by Jones and drawn by Thorne, this series suffers from very ordinary plotting and cartoonish art, especially in Thorne's rendition of people. A few odd human touches occur which are really quite nice, but never for more than two or three pages an issue, if at all. Red Sonja continues in her own title.

MARVEL
Nov 75-Nov 76
7 issues

APS

MARVEL PREMIERE

This title was designed as a tryout series, featuring a different lead character every few issues. Although the first 2 issues starred Warlock this concept was not put into effect until issue 26 as Dr Strange (3-14) and Iron Fist (15-25) ran for several issues until they each continued into their own titles.

Issue 3 contains a lovely, surreal story with exquisite Barry Smith art, but thereafter followed a horribly

MARVEL
From April 72
58 issues +

1, 12-14, 31, 32, 38,
41, 44-48, 50, 54, 56.

convoluted and often senseless plotline by Gardner Fox, which was mercifully laid to rest by Steve Englehart. He and Frank Brunner then went on to produce what was, if you're not offended by the religious implications, an excellent time travel story.

15 saw the beginning of Daniel Rand, a youth who had entered the mystic city of K'un Lun and had been taught oriental fighting skills by the race of immortals who dwelt there. The gateway to this city appears for one day every 10 years atop the Himalayas and thus, 10 years later Daniel Rand, now Iron Fist, dutifully went back into the big bad world to exact his revenge on the man who murdered his father. It took four issues to tell his origin and another five to resolve the complications created in those four. Despite all the cliches outlined above, it was all actually quite good, but, being a continued storyline, one is left to wonder how much better it could have been if any one writer had been able to stay with it for more than 3 issues.

From 26 the originally intended showcase format actually started and there followed a series of somewhat daft ideas, such as the Legion of Monsters in 28. Since then the book has produced a number of very good stories, the best of which are: Woodgod (31), by Bill Mantlo, Howie Chaykin's sf bounty hunter, Monark Starstalker (32), Weirdworld by Doug Moench and Mike Ploog (38), Seeker 3000, a good sf story by Moench and Tom Sutton and Jack of Hearts by Mantlo in 44. 45 and 46 tied up the plotlines from the Man-Wolf series by Dave Kraft and George Perez and 47 and 48 starred a new Ant-Man by David Michelinie and John Byrne. Alice Cooper starred in a story by Ed Hannigan and Tom Sutton (50); an excellent western hero by the name of Caleb Hammer, written by Peter Gillis, appeared in 54 and 56 printed a story by Len Wein and Howie Chaykin about Dominic Fortune that had been lying around at Marvel for 3 years. The book is currently reprinting Dr Who stories from British Marvel in colour for the first time.

APS/DWC

MARVEL PRESENTS

The first 2 issues of this title starred Bloodstone, a John Warner creation best forgotten. The Guardians of the Galaxy, who had debuted in Marvel Superheroes 18 and had been featured in GS Defenders 5 and Defenders 26-29, took over with 3. Steve Gerber scripted a fine serial in 3-7, the best individual issue being 5, where the Guardians land on a planet that serves as a cosmic lunatic asylum. Later issues by Roger Stern were also of a very high standard, making this one of Marvel's best short run titles. Issue 8 was a reprint and loose plotlines were tied up in Thor annual 6.

FP

MARVEL SPECTACULAR

Reprints 60's Thor stories, commencing with Thor 128.

MARVEL

Oct 75-Aug 77
12 issues

3-7,9-12.

APS

MARVEL SPOTLIGHT (1)

Another showcase title that was never as good as its sister title Premiere, the idea being to try out already established characters. Of interest are the 3 issue run of Werewolf by Night (2-4) by Gerry Conway, Mike Friedrich and Mike Ploog, and a solo Sub-Mariner story in 27, which served as a kind of origin for Deathlok. Sandwiched between these issues were a Ghost

MARVEL

Nov 71-Apr 77
33 issues

2-4,27-29,31,32.



Rider series (5-11) and the origin of the Son of Satan and 12 more solo tales (12-24). Neither was particularly innovative or entertaining, nor was the Scarecrow tale in 26. Moon-Knight starred in an over gimmicky two parter by Doug Moench and Don Perlin in 28 and 29 and Jim Starlin and Howie Chaykin gave a reason for Nick Fury's seemingly eternal youth in 31. Archie Goodwin introduced Spiderwoman in 32, giving her a plausible origin which was subsequently ignored by Marv Wolfman in her own title. 33 tied up plotlines from Deathlok's series in Astonishing Tales.

DWC

MARVEL SPOTLIGHT (2)

This was Marvel's most recent showcase title, although judging from the contents, maybe the comic should have been called Marvel Starlight. It featured Captain Marvel, Starlord and Captain Universe, with the only non cosmic strip being Dragon Lord in issue 5. 1 and 2 conclude the plotlines from Captain Marvel 62 by Doug Moench and Pat Broderick and Captain Marvel also appears in 3, 4 and 8. Captain Universe by Bill Mantlo and Steve Ditko ran in 9-11, but the highlight of the series is Moench and Tom Sutton's Starlord strip in 6 and 7.

MARVEL

Jul 79-Mar 81
11 issues

6,7.

SW

MARVEL SUPER ACTION

Its first incarnation reprinted Captain America stories from 100 on; 12 and 13 reprint the first 2 Steranko issues (with pages cut) if you can't afford the originals. When revived it reprinted issues of the Avengers, starting with number 55, which was where the deceased Marvel Triple Action had discontinued them.

MARVEL

May 77-Apr 79(13)
From Dec 79
29 issues +

APS

MARVEL SUPER-HEROES

Number 1 is completely independent of the others; it was brought out as a one-off issue and reprinted Daredevil's origin with golden age back ups. In the mag's second run, the numbering continued directly from Fantasy Masterpieces (1). All 64 pages, the format of 12-20 was an original lead feature (different characters every issue) backed up by golden age reprints. 12 and 13 were the first 2 appearances of Captain Marvel, but apart from introducing all the characters, the issues were fairly nondescript. The best original stories were Spider-Man (14), Black Knight (17) and Guardians of the Galaxy in 18 (origin and first appearance). The most noteworthy golden age reprints were the All-Winners Squad in 17 and 18. The book became an all post 1960 reprint title with 21, reprinting Daredevil 2-11, X-Men 2-8, Iron Man (from Tales of Suspense 74-77) plus early Hulk stories from the original Tales to Astonish. With its third run it reprinted complete issues of Tales to Astonish (1) from about 75; when Sub-Mariner ended the Hulk reprints continued from his own book and are currently up to 145.

MARVEL

Oct 66 (1)
(12) Dec 67-Nov 71
(31)
From Sep 72
95 issues +

18.

APS

MARVEL TALES

Issues 1-32 were 64 pages, although the first 2 went under the title of Marvel Tales Annual and reprinted the origins of many of the

MARVEL

1964-1965 (2)
From Jul 66
125 issues +

superheroes existing in 1965. From 3-27, the reprints were Spider-man (virtually from the start) plus the first 25 stories of Thor and the Human Torch from Journey Into Mystery (1) and Strange Tales respectively. 28-32 reprint 2 Spider-man stories each and 30 has an all new, fairly bad Angel story continued from Ka-Zar (1) 3. With 33 the title changed to the conventional 32 page format, reprinting Spider-man stories the most recently reprinted issue being 148. 100 was a special giant-size issue and featured a mildly interesting Hawkeye/Two Gun Kid back-up by Scott Edelman and Mike Nasser.

APS

MARVEL TEAM-UP

The inconsistencies and lack of continuity between this title and Amazing Spider-man give the impression that the Spider-man featured here is a completely different character from the one in his own book. All but 7 issues have guest starred another hero with Spider-man; the others have featured either Hulk or Human Torch team-ups. Some early issues by Gerry Conway were distinctly good, but with issue 12 the scripting hit a low point and promptly headed in a downwards direction. 28 is worth mentioning as an all time Conway classic in which Manhattan Island is towed out into the Atlantic and held for ransom. Bill Mantlo took over with 38 and effected a distinct improvement which Claremont continued from 57. The latter's heart never seemed to be in the strip, however, and the quality varied tremendously from issue to issue. 79 (Red Sonja) was very tactfully handled and in my opinion 82-85 (Black Widow) are undoubtedly the best four issues of the title. After Claremont's departure in 89 the comic degenerated into a series of abysmal fill-ins.

APS

MARVEL TRIPLE ACTION

This reprinted early Fantastic Four stories in the first 4 issues and then switched to Avengers reprints, picking up the series with issues in the teens and continued until Avengers 54. The giant size issues also included Daredevil reprints.

MARVEL

Feb 72-Mar 75(24)
Aug 75-Apr 79
47 issues
2 GS May-Jul 75

FP

MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE

By their own nature, team up books like this are very difficult to write well. The presence of a (usually) different guest star teaming up with the Thing every issue is not conducive to multi-part storylines and makes each issue seem like a fill in. Nevertheless Steve Gerber succeeded in the first 7 issues because he correctly grasped the Thing's artful sense of humour instead of turning him into a continuous wise cracking machine and also because he used and maintained several supporting characters. After that the book fell into all the traps that team-up books do, the issues in the teens being the absolute nadir. It wasn't until Mark Gruenwald and Ralph Macchio took over that things looked up; they provide a perfect example to all other writers of how to handle such a book, with beautiful plotting and excellent handling of the guest stars. Annual 2, by Jim Starlin, is the end to the Thanos series; not the best story of that run, but still excellent.

MARVEL

From Jan 74
73 issues +
5 Annuals 76-80

1-7, 10, 42, 43, 51,
53-58, 60-67, 69-73,
Annual 2.

APS

MARVEL'S GREATEST COMICS

Carrying on directly from Marvel Collectors Item Classics, issues 23-34 were giant sized and continued reprinting Fantastic Four, Iron Man, and Dr Strange and started on Captain America's early stories from Tales of Suspense. From 35 on, the book became a 32 page Fantastic Four reprint title; 116 being the last issue reprinted before cancellation struck a second time.

MARVEL
(23) Oct 69-Mar 79
(82)
Dec 79-Jan 81
96 issues

APS

MASTER OF KUNG-FU

The first issue is 17, as the title changes from Special Marvel Edition, where 2 previous Shang-Chi stories appeared. The series about the son of Fu Manchu was created by Steve Engelhart and Jim Starlin at the height of the kung-fu craze and was later taken over by Doug Moench. Moench infused the strip with an intricate balance of philosophy, characterisation and the obligatory action. The arrival of Paul Gulacy as artist resulted in some of the best comics in recent memory. Particularly worth mentioning are the 3 part Mordillo story (33-35), the classic Cat story in 38 and 39 and the story that won an Eagle award as best continued story of 1976, in 40 and 42-51. Sadly Gulacy left with issue 50 and although the scripts have remained consistently excellent, the art has never reached the same plateau. Currently Mike Zeck is turning in a fine job though, as can be seen from the second Fu Manchu multi-parter. In the listing of highspots it should be noted that a merely average issue of MOKF is still likely to be one of the top five books in any given month, such is the standard of writing, so the list is compiled by that standard rather than a general one.

MARVEL
(17) From Apr 74
98 issues +
4 GS Sep 74-Jun 75
1 Annual 76

29-31, 33-35, 38-40,
42-52, 71, 77-89, 96.

FP

MEN OF WAR

This was an average war comic which differed in that its main feature 'Code Name-Gravedigger' starred a black soldier who was used as a special agent. The earlier issues by David Michelinie weren't too bad. Back-up features have included Enemy Ace, Dateline: Frontline and Rosa, Master Spy.

DC
Aug 77-Mar 80
26 issues

HY

METAL MEN

After a successful run in Showcase the series was granted its own comic book, produced by creator Robert Kanigher and Ross Andru. The Metal Men were "robots" created by Doc Magnus and consisted of Gold, Lead, Platinum, Iron, Mercury and Tin. They were later joined by Nameless, Tin's girlfriend and female counterpart. Each metal man had a personality and abilities that corresponded to its metal, eg Mercury was hot tempered and able to split his body apart and Tin was timid and not too strong. These were very entertaining and light hearted stories, and the villains were usually creatures made of other metals or chemicals or plastics.

The series underwent a dramatic change from 33, when the stories became more serious, with Doc Magnus going mad and the Metal Men

DC
May 63-Jan 70 (41)
Mar 73-Aug 73 (44)
May 76-Mar 78
56 issues

14-17, 19, 21-34, 37,
39-41, 45-47.

being hunted down by the authorities and eventually being ordered to be destroyed. They were eventually saved by a man who gave them human identities and employed them as agents. This was not the direction intended for the original Metal Men, but it was well handled nonetheless by Mike Sekowsky. The first revival was for 3 reprint issues, but the second revival initiated by Steve Gerber and carried on by Marty Pasko and Gerry Conway returned the team to their familiar metal bodies and produced some entertaining stories drawn by Walt Simonson and Joe Staton.

HY

METAMORPHO

After a successful tryout in Brave and the Bold, Metamorpho was given his own comic. This was a fine, light hearted, inventive and somewhat tongue in cheek series (by writer Bob Haney and artist Ramona Fradon) about the man who could change his body into any element or structure. Great supporting characters included Sapphire Stagg (Metamorpho's girlfriend), Simon Stagg (her wealthy, scheming father who was using Metamorpho for his own purposes), Java (a stone age man brought back to life by Stagg) and Metamorpho's female counterpart and other romantic interest, Element Girl. A nice entertaining series that was unfortunately cancelled halfway through a story.

HY

MICRONAUTS

One of Bill Mantlo's best creations, the characters are based on Mego toys and the series could be summed up as the Inhumans meet Star Wars. The first 12 issues followed a rebellion against Baron Karza led by the Micronauts; the strong plot and characterization are greatly enhanced by the art of Mike Golden. With issue 13 Howie Chaykin took over the art and couldn't match his predecessor's work. This, together with a series of totally aimless plots meant a decline in quality for the next few issues. With the arrival of Pat Broderick on art (19) and the resurrection of Baron Karza (25) the book has begun to return to its previous level of quality.

DWC

MIGHTY CRUSADERS

This was a further step in Mighty's policy of attempting to cash in on the success of super powered characters being produced elsewhere. First appearing in Flyman 31, the Comet, Black Hood, Shield, Fly Man and Fly Girl were lumped together as the Mighty Crusaders and duplicated the Avengers (right down to the costumes) in every respect save quality. Reading this is a truly painful experience; the sort of sentence you'd wish to inflict upon your worst enemy. Utterly contemptible stories (plots is far too good a word to use) were complemented by totally ridiculous dialogue. If you haven't got the message yet, this wasn't very good and neither was Steel Sterling, who commandeered the title for the final issue.

APB

MIGHTY MARVEL WESTERN

This was a giant size reprint title that featured Rawhide Kid and Two Gun Kid in every issue, with Kid Colt in 1-25 and Matt Blade in

DC
Aug 65-Apr 68
17 issues

9,10,12-17.

MARVEL
From Jan 79
27 issues +
2 Annals 79,80.

1-12.

MIGHTY
Nov 65-Oct 66
7 issues

MARVEL
Oct 68-Sep 76
46 issues



Sp. Kors '81

25-46. In general the reprints were longer stories of the characters, which made for more interesting plots. If you want to sample a typical Marvel western comic, this is the one.

FP

MR MIRACLE

Another superb title that was originally part of Jack Kirby's New Genesis/Apokalips trilogy. Scott Free - Mr Miracle, super escape artist, battled Darkseid (ruler of Apokalips) and his servants Granny Goodness, Vermin Vunderbar, Dr Bedlam etc with his girlfriend (and later wife) Big Barda an ex Apokalips warrior and Oberon, his midget assistant. Kirby was at the height of his career and captured a real sense of epic and excitement with his amazing concepts. Issue 9, relating Scott Free's origin, is a real classic but unfortunately from issue 12 the book became more superhero oriented and featured tales unrelated to the trilogy and slowly declined in quality, improving only in time for Mr Miracle's wedding in 18.

The series returned under the guidance of Steve Englehart with Marshall Rogers art, to be followed by the team of Steve Gerber and Mike Golden. Naturally with all this talent the revival was well handled and very impressive, but somehow it just wasn't Jack Kirby's Mr Miracle. Great stuff nevertheless and a series no one should be without.

HY

MONSTERS ON THE PROWL

The numbering on this title continued from Chamber of Darkness. It reprinted the slightly longer than normal horror stories from the 50's with such marvellous titles as "I defied GONDULLAH, the Living Mummy" (in 12 if you really want to know). Issues 9-13 contained one new tale and Steve Englehart's first comic story was in 15. 16 starred King Kull.

MARVEL
(9) Feb 71-Nov 73
(27)
Jun 74-Oct 74
30 issues

FP

MOON KNIGHT

Doug Moench's creation is Marvel's nearest equivalent to the Batman, being independently wealthy and primarily a thinking athlete. After his premiere appearance in Werewolf by Night 32-33 he was given a solo tryout in Marvel Spotlight (1) 28 and 29, leading to a back-up series illustrated by Bill Sienkiewicz in the Hulk colour magazine. The creative team has remained on the first few issues of Moon Knight's own title, all of which have been excellent, evoking the mood of the 30's Batman stories and combining it with the sophistication of today.

MARVEL
From Nov 80
5 issues +

1-5.

FP

MORLOCK 2001

Set in an Orwellian 1984 society, Morlock was an artificial man grown from a plant and able to transform himself into a hideous monster. A rather directionless series that, while enjoyable, didn't really explore the setting and suffered from the Atlas overdose of gratuitous violence. Worth getting if you've a surplus of cash.

ATLAS
Feb 75-Jul 75
3 issues

FP

MS MARVEL

When Carol Danvers' dying wishes were fed into a nearby Kree psyche-magnitron, she became a female copy of the Kree Captain Marvel, with similar powers and a limited precognitive sixth sense. Gerry Conway doctored this strip with the first 2 issues. The parallels between Carol and Linda "Supergirl" Danvers and the female counterpart to Mar-vell/Superman bit made his intentions too obvious: to do a DC heroine in a Marvel comic. Although flawed, the strip has many redeeming features: Chris Claremont made a brave effort with his characterisations and was helped on his way by some sturdy artwork from Jim Mooney (yes, the Supergirl artist), Carmine Infantino and 2 issue wonder Dave Cockrum. A good comic to read with the occasional issues-worth of nice artwork. **EW**

MARVEL
Jan 77-Apr 79
23 issues

MY GREATEST ADVENTURE

This was a title that offered dull adventure, science-fiction and mystery stories until the Doom Patrol took over from issue 80. They were so successful that the title changed to Doom Patrol with issue 86.

DC
Feb 55-Feb 64
85 issues

80-85.

HY

MYSTERIOUS SUSPENSE

This was a fully extended 25 page story which featured the Question, a Spirit/Creeper character, after his appearances as a back-up in Blue Beetle. Steve Ditko produced a story that managed to avoid the comic cliches of long fights etc. A book that deserves to be well remembered.

CHARLTON
Oct 68
1 issue

1.

DWG

MYSTERY IN SPACE

For the majority of its 60's run Mystery in Space featured the adventures of Adam Strange - an earthman transported by zeta beam across 25 trillion miles of space to Ranagar, where he battled any planet shaking menace that reared its ugly head alongside his Ranagarian beloved, Alanna. Gardner Fox and Carmine Infantino gave five years of consistent good taste and quality to this, DC's best ever science fiction strip. Early issues have between 8 and 15 pages featuring Adam and he is accompanied by many short features by DC's best; notably Sid Greene's Star Rovers. Sadly the last 20 issues don't match up to the departed Fox/Infantino magic and features like Ultra the Multi Alien should be scrupulously avoided. The Justice League team up with Adam Strange in 75 and it's worth mentioning that Murphy Anderson did some superlative inking on most of Infantino's stories.

DC
May 51-Sep 66(110)
From Sep 80
117 issues +

53-58,65,66,68,72-
86,90,91.

DC revived the title in 1980 as a showcase for science fiction short stories. Despite several distinguished strips by the likes of Marshall Rogers and Joe Kubert, the comic looks set for cancellation. **SW**

NEW GODS

Eons ago one world divided to become two: New Genesis (the good) and Apokalips (the bad). This was the basis for Jack Kirby's superb Fourth World trilogy, which had Darkseid,

DC
Mar 71-Nov 72(11)
Jul 77-Aug 78
19 issues

ruler of Apokalips, searching for the omni-powerful anti-life equation on Earth and being opposed by the gods of New Genesis, such as Orion (actually Darkseid's son), Lightray, Metron and the Highfather.

1-19.

Kirby was at the height of his career here. He superbly portrayed a real feeling of epic and power in the series. In my opinion, issue 7, which explained the origin of the saga, must be one of the best comics ever produced. Issues 4-9 also reprinted golden age Manhunter stories by Simon and Kirby.

The comic was cancelled, but later revived after a New Gods appearance in First Issue Special 13. The new run was scripted by Gerry Conway and art was by Don Newton and they both did a good job, but despite introducing new New Gods, they weren't quite able to recapture the grandeur originated by Kirby. The feature continued in Adventure 459-460 after cancellation. A simply superb series that should be in everyone's collection.

HY

NEW TEEN TITANS

Taking Robin, Wonder Girl and Kid Flash from the old team, revamping Beast Boy and adding three new characters, editor Len Wein and writer Marv Wolfman came up with a team that, while derivative and an attempt to parallel Marvel's X-Men, is also very entertaining. Much of the credit for this must go to the dynamic pencils of George Perez. The first appearance of the team was as a detachable story in DC Presents 26.

FF

NICK FURY, AGENT OF SHIELD

The splitting of Strange Tales into 2 books, Dr Strange (1) and Nick Fury, finally gave Jim Steranko the chance to really turn himself loose in the latter. Although his plots still left something to be desired, his marvellous use of pacing and suspense more than made things even. Additionally, unlike so many other creators, he really used the art to tell the story. He left with issue 5, however, and Gary Friedrich took over after a few fill-ins. He failed because he attempted to emulate Steranko without being capable of doing so; whereas Steranko merely went over the top, Friedrich pushed everything over the cliff's edge. 12-14 were his best efforts, but these could not stave off cancellation with 15. The unresolved plotlines were concluded in Avengers 72. The book was revived later as a 64 page reprint title, re-presenting the Fury stories from Strange Tales 136-144.

APS

NICK FURY AND HIS AGENTS OF SHIELD

Bearing a name virtually identical to the bona-fide title (done, no doubt, to deliberately confuse everyone), this short lived reprint series retold the Fury stories from Strange Tales 146-155.

MARVEL
Feb 73-Oct 73
5 issues

APS

NIGHT RIDER

This reprinted the original Ghost Rider series. As Marvel already had a successful character by that name in 1974 the word 'ghost'

MARVEL
Oct 74-Aug 75
6 issues

was altered to 'night' throughout. Due to the different layout techniques used in 67 and 74 some of Dick Ayers' double page spreads were printed back to back.

FP

NOMAN

The second spin off title from Thunder Agents, it featured solo stories of an android who could switch his mind from one artificial host body to another. Like all Tower titles the art is excellent, but the stories let the book down.

TOWER
Nov 66-Mar 67
2 issues

DWC

NOT BRAND ECHH

The first 8 issues concentrated on lampooning Marvel's characters and from 9 the page count (and price) increased as it began to feature movie and TV parodies as well. The Forbush Man starred in 5 and 8 and was very funny, as was the origin of the Simple Surfer in 13, but the most inspired take-off was that of Superman in 7. Unfortunately not everything was funny and the comic was probably cancelled in time.

FP

MARVEL
Aug 67-May 69
13 issues
=====

3,6,7,8,12,13.

NOVA

Teenager Richard Rider was given the powers of a Nova Prime from Xandar in order that he could avenge the destruction of a planet. With super strength, partial invulnerability and the ability to fly he fought a number of new villains in a series that was a conscious attempt by Marv Wolfman to imitate the old Marvel heroes of the 60's. They always won, but things rarely turned out completely right. The first few issues were very nice, but the book lost its way with 13 (12 was a silly Spider-Man team up). By the time the book came back to form it was too late to avoid cancellation. Loose plot threads are tied up in Fantastic Four 208-214.

FP

MARVEL
Sep 76-May 79
25 issues
=====

1-11,19.

NUKLA

A US spy pilot is blown to smithereens by an enemy's nuclear defences, but manages to re-assemble himself by sheer force of will - thus is born Nukla, the atomic spy. The stories are predictably poor but there was some above average artwork by Dick Giordano, Steve Ditko and Sal Trapani among others.

SW

DELL
Dec 65-Sep 66
4 issues

OMAC

Jack Kirby's last and shortest series for DC concerned Buddy Blank, a menial in the latter part of the century, who was transformed by a sophisticated satellite into a human powerhouse - a One Man Army Corps, who maintained a psychic link with the satellite. As always with later Kirby work, the concepts and plotting were incredible, but poor pacing and bad scripting resulted in a duff series,

FP

DC
Oct 74-Dec 75
8 issues



OMEGA

A very strange series concerning a man in a blue costume and red cape with immense strength who landed on Earth and was somehow connected with a serious-minded young boy, whose parents were robots. After that synopsis it will come as no surprise to learn that Steve Gerber, along with Mary Skrenes, created and scripted the series (apart from 7 and 8). It seems that they were also the only ones who knew what was going on, since the fill-ins were hack jobs and the conclusion to the series (by Steven Grant in Defenders 76 and 77) was messy and inconsistent. I liked this, but it's not to everyone's taste.

FP

MARVEL

Mar 76-Oct 77
10 issues

OUR ARMY AT WAR

This was without any doubt the best war title ever produced. From 88 it featured Sgt Rock of Easy Co. This was always a good series, but from the early to mid 70's it was excellent with stories by Robert Kanigher and art mainly by Russ Heath. The stories never glorified war, but rather showed the misery of it. There were many excellent character studies of G.I.'s, civilians and also the enemy - who weren't always shown as cruel barbarians, but rather soldiers who were just doing their duty and obeying orders. Of course, like all fictional war stories, they can never be truly realistic, but they did occasionally come close, despite a few fantasy oriented stories and the fact that there were no great casualties among the main characters. Issue 151 contained the first appearance of Enemy Ace. The comic eventually changed title to Sgt Rock. Good reading, even for ardent superhero fans.

HY

DC

Aug 52-Feb 77
301 issues

238,245-255,257-
260,263,265,267,
272,273,279,281,
300.

OUR FIGHTING FORCES

This war comic included Gunner and Sarge, Devil Dog, Capt Hunter and Hunters Hellcats, but is best remembered for the Losers (in 123-181) - "a special unit possessing unique battle skills, who never win without losing," starring Capt Storm, Gunner and Sarge and Johnny Cloud. Robert Kanigher, one of comics' best war writers, wrote their stories up to issues 150, with most issues superbly drawn by John Severin. This was quite a good series, but got a bit way-out when Jack Kirby took over in 151-162. Still, he kept it fairly interesting until Kanigher returned with 163. Not a bad war comic.

HY

DC

Nov 54-Oct 78
181 issues

OUTLAW KID

Most of the Marvel western heroes were very similar, and could have been the lead in any one of their western strips. Outlaw Kid was no different. Originally from the fifties, the first 9 issues were reprint before new tales appeared in 10-16. Although not very good, the plotline was at least concluded before the book returned to reprints.

FP

MARVEL

Aug 70-Oct 75
30 issues

PEACEMAKER

Christopher Smith is a US peace envoy and no man is more opposed to war and violence than he, but when diplomacy fails, he becomes

CHARLTON

Mar 67-Nov 67
5 issues

Peacemaker, master of the weapons he pleads with the world to lay down. The idea is dated now, but still worth looking at. He proved so popular as the back-up in Fightin' 5 40 and 41 that he was given his own title. Unfortunately Joe Gill's plots, believable for 9 pages, were overstretched at feature length. Try 1-3 though for Pat Boyette's best comics work.

SW

PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN

Having already ruined the character by creating Marvel Team-Up, Marvel hammered the final nail in Spider-man's coffin by initiating his third monthly book. Issue 1 is worth buying to laugh at Gerry Conway's text page in which he promises that all 3 books will mesh neatly so as to make it appear as though there is just one Spider-man book published 3 times a month. But even when considered apart from Team-Up and Amazing, the stories have been spectacularly remarkable in the consistency of their mediocrity, accompanied by some decidedly pedestrian art. There is nothing at all deserving of high spot status here, but if my arm were twisted enough, I suppose that I could admit that 1-5 (Conway/Goodwin) and 25-31 (Mantlo) aren't bad. Roger Stern has struck up a faint spark of hope with current issues and the fact that Denny O'Neil is editing all 3 Spider-man books can't worsen matters, but it'll take a lot of seeing before I can believe that events will improve.

MARVEL
From Dec 76
52 issues +
2 Annuals 79,80.

APS

PHANTOM

The first 17 issues were published by Gold Key and issues 18-28 by King Features. There was no issue 29 and Charlton picked up the rights with issue 30. Although some good writers handled the earlier Charlton stories the title was very weak. With issue 67 the book was revived by Don Newton, who managed to breathe new life into the character by utilizing the "Shadow" aspects of the early Phantom and setting stories in unusual locations and times. Particularly recommended are 70 - a delightful pastiche of gangster movies (co-starring Humphrey Bogart) - and 74, which is one of the better bicentennial stories put out in 1976.

CHARLTON
Nov 62-Jul 66(17)
Sep 66-Dec 67(28)
(30)Feb 69-Jan 77
74 issues

70,71,74.

DWC

PHANTOM STRANGER

The series starring DC's most mysterious superhero started off with new stories framing old 50's reprints. There was a drastic change with 4, which introduced a superhero element and introduced the Stranger's arch-foe, Tala, a sorceress. The series reached its peak with a three part saga wherein the Stranger battled Tala. Also around this time there was a superb back-up strip, The Spawn of Frankenstein, by Marv Wolfman and Mike Kaluta. Len Wein and Jim Aparo left the Stranger's strip with 27 and it rapidly became dull, improving only just before cancellation, with a 3 part Phantom Stranger/Deadman team-up in 39-41.

DC
Jun 69-Mar 76
41 issues

4,17,18,20-26.

HY

PHOENIX

A true mess of a comic. An injured astronaut discovers a race of aliens who

ATLAS
Jan 75-Oct 75
4 issues

want to destroy the earth, and fights them with the help of a very vaguely powered suit. The only issue of interest is 3, which has a tongue in cheek back-up strip starring the Dark Avenger, with lovely art by Pat Broderick. With issue 4 the strip totally changed direction, becoming, if anything, worse than it was.

3.

IT

PLANET OF VAMPIRES

Despite the off-putting title, this was one of Atlas' most worthwhile efforts. Some astronauts return to earth after a long mission in space and have to come to terms with a planet populated by vampires and street savages. Despite having 3 writers and artists in 3 issues, consistency was maintained and it was a series with infinite promise.

ATLAS
Feb 75-Jul 75
3 issues

1-3.

FP

PLASTIC MAN

The first series was not done the way that creator Jack Cole intended Plastic Man. The stories were too comical and the art too cartoony. The second series was, however, truer to the original Plastic Man with good, fun stories and impressive art. It's a shame that it never caught on.

DC
Dec 66-Jun 68(11)
Mar 76-Nov 77
20 issues

HY

PLOP

This great humour title was strongly influenced by Mad's Sergio Aragones. It featured weird humour stories and cartoons, the earlier issues being the most amusing. The book was wittily hosted by Cain, Abel and Eve. Issues 1-19 featured superb covers by either Basil Wolverton or Wally Wood.

DC
Oct 73-Dec 76
24 issues

FP

POLICE ACTION

Lomax, the lead hero here, was obviously based on the TV detective series of the time and, quite incredibly, manages to be worse than all of them. The back-up strip, Luke Malone - Manhunter, features art by Mike Ploog. Don't get too excited though, because it looks as if he used his feet to draw this whilst using his hands for Man-Thing.

ATLAS
Feb 75-Jun 75
3 issues

FP

POWER MAN (AND IRON FIST)

A petty criminal was framed by his partner and ended up in Seagate prison. In return for parole he volunteered for cell regeneration experiments. They were disrupted and he emerged from a chemical bath with bulletproof skin and substantially increased strength. Breaking out of prison, he adopted the name Luke Cage and set himself up as a Hero for Hire, the title of the book for the first 16 issues. The origin by Archie Goodwin and George

MARVEL
From Jun 72
67 issues +
1 Annual 76

1,2,28,30,31,48-50,
58-67.

Tuska was very good, but subsequent tales were of indifferent quality, a problem that has plagued the book until recently. A succession of scripters tried the book, the most aesthetically successful being Don McGregor, who produced a fine three parter in 28, 30 and 31 and introduced Cage's greatest adversary, the coke machine. With the cancellation of Iron Fist's own title the two characters were teamed as from 48. The Chris Claremont/John Byrne team produced 3 good issues before another slide into mediocrity. Current scripts are by Mary Duffy, who is maintaining the most consistent period that the book has seen. A slightly awkward relationship between the two lead characters has been well defined and some good two part tales, drawn by Kerry Gammill have been appearing recently.

FP

PREZ

A lot of people seem to put this comic by Joe Simon and Jerry Grandenetti down. It was, in fact, a very original idea that had an 18 year old boy become president of the U.S.A. Interesting enemies included Boss Smiley (a man with an actual smiley badge head) and a crippled vampire.

DC
Sep 73-Mar 74
4 issues

HY

RAGMAN

Drawn from the same mould as the Batman, (hero avenging death of parent etc.) the character exploited this time honoured cliché well, to become very good reading. Moody writing by Bob Kanigher and realistic art by Joe Kubert and the Redondo Studio gave this book an unusually evocative feel.

DC
Aug 76-Jul 77
5 issues

1-5.

DWC

RAWHIDE KID

One of the western strips on which Stan Lee developed the style that was later so successfully applied to the superheroes. Rawhide Kid was another sure shot roaming the west, but he couldn't compete with the superheroes. The comic went reprint with 115 and was eventually cancelled.

MARVEL
Mar 55-May 79
151 issues
1 Annual 71

FP

RED SONJA

This series continues directly from Marvel Feature (2) and Roy Thomas took over the writing. Although the first 6 issues were average, those following had hopelessly jumbled plots with no explanation of events, nor of the motives behind the characters' actions (including, in many cases, Sonja herself!) Additionally the contrast between Frank Thorne's art in the first 11 issues and the competence of John Buscema in 12 is truly quite remarkable. The best feature of the series is Cat Yronwode's letter in issue 13.

MARVEL
Jan 77-May 79
15 issues

APS

RED WOLF

This Red Indian creation of Roy Thomas first appeared in Avengers 80 and 81, but the Red Wolf that appeared here in the first 6

MARVEL
May 72-Sep 73
9 issues



RED WOLF

issues was an ancestor of the present day character. Although this was Marvel's best western series it still pales beside most DC western series. The issues set in the old west are better than the last 3 set in the present.

FP

RIMA

Adapted from the novel "Green Mansions", this South American jungle girl had a way above average strip. The 4 part adaptation of the book and the 3 subsequent issues were all scripted by Bob Kanigher and superbly illustrated by Nestor Redondo. Joe Kubert's editorial touch and covers should not go uncredited, nor should the lovely and imaginative back-up strips by Alex Nino (Space Voyagers) and Noly Zamora (Space Marshall). Recommended reading.

DC
May 74-May 75
7 issues

1-7.

SW

RINGO KID

The misadventures of Marvel's half indian western hero. The promise of the halfbreed theme was never lived up to, and the 70's strips were overshadowed by the accompanying 50's reprints, which were pretty poor themselves. It all adds up to a consistent disappointment.

MARVEL
Jan 70-Nov 76
30 issues

EW

RIP HUNTER

The time-master and his associates travelled through time in their time-sphere, resembling the Challengers of the Unknown crossed with Dr Who. Well related, but uncredited stories, drawn for the main part by DC evergreen Bill Ely (he drew the Scoop Scanlon strip in Action Comics no. 1 !). Rip Hunter also appeared in Showcase 20-21 and 25-26.

DC
Apr 61-May 65
29 issues

SW

ROM

Based on a Parker Brothers toy, Rom is an avenging alien fighting Dire Wraiths and encountering the usual distrust from humanity. Though Bill Mantlo's writing is not up to his early Micronauts standard, the book has a good 50's science fiction atmosphere to it and has begun to develop beyond its limited concept, becoming good, if undemanding, reading.

MARVEL
From Dec 79
16 issues +

12.

DWC

SANDMAN

Deep in the dream dimension stands the Sandman's HQ, from which he and his creepy pals, Glob and Brute, launch themselves into the nightmares of kids. Originally (and very wisely) intended to be a one shot special reuniting the famous Simon and Kirby team, this title became a bit of a nightmare itself. 2 and 5 have weak scripts by Mike Fleisher and all prove to be utterly puerile.

DC
Winter 74 (1)
May 75-Jan 76
6 issues

SW

SARGE STEEL

First appearing in Judo Master 91, Sarge Steel was a private investigator who lost his left hand and had it replaced with a steel one from the wrist up. Set in the world of international espionage, the series must be the closest thing in comic book format to James Bond, featuring last minute, death defying escapes right, left and centre. There's really nothing new or original here, but the comic is competently handled and makes for good reading nevertheless. The title changed to Secret Agent with issue 9, but only lasted 2 more issues.

APS

CHARLTON

Dec 64-Aug 66
8 issues

SAVAGE COMBAT TALES

Another gory Atlas war mag, this time starring Sgt Stryker's Death Squad; a collection of convicts who fought in the North African desert during WW2. It's rough stuff and Archie Goodwin should be ashamed of himself for writing it.

FP

ATLAS

Feb 75-Jul 75
3 issues

SCORPION

A series highly regarded by fandom due to Howie Chaykin's plot and art on the first 2 issues. The comic concerned a 30's mercenary adventurer who later moved to Marvel, calling himself Dominic Fortune. The third issue updated the series to the present and turned the Scorpion into a costumed crimefighter, destroying all quality in the process.

FP

ATLAS

Feb 75-Jul 75
3 issues

SEA DEVILS

The Sea Devils were a group of undersea divers and yet another successful Showcase graduate. The group consisted of a brainy leader, his blonde girlfriend, her kid brother and a loveable hunk of meat; there can be little doubt that they are the prototypes of the Fantastic Four. Apart from beautifully toned covers, there's little to recommend here. The stories are nostalgically nice, but nothing you're going to keep.

FP

DC

Oct 60-Aug 67
35 issues

SGT FURY AND HIS HOWLING COMMANDOS

Of all of Marvel's long running titles, this one must surely have been the most static. Set in World War 2, the plot for absolutely any issue picked at random will involve Nick Fury and his team of crack soldiers parachuting into some Nazi occupied area with orders to rescue a captured Allied commander, destroy a missile base or free a town from Nazi domination. As they are the antithesis of realistic war comics, reading more than 5 issues becomes incredibly tedious. The only realistic issue was 18, in which Nick Fury's girlfriend is killed, the first such occurrence in comics. The comic's redeeming features include the jocular dialogue initiated by Stan Lee and the well established (if completely two dimensional) personalities of Fury and his Howlers. Although Roy Thomas took over as writer in 29, and Gary Friedrich in 42, any changes in scripting style were barely noticable at the best of times. A mention should also go to Dick Ayers who drew virtually every issue. From issue 80

MARVEL

From May 63
162 issues +
7 Annuals 65-71

every odd numbered issue reprinted earlier stories and the book went completely reprint with 121. Issues of note are 13 (with Captain America), the aforementioned 18, 22 (the best story for the humorous dialogue aspect) and 27 (the story of how Fury gained his eyepatch).
APS

SGT ROCK

This comic continued from Our Army at War, featuring comics top war hero in more or less the same standard of stories. It is always realistically written by Robert Kanigher (though sometimes verging on fantasy) and well drawn.

DC
(302) From Apr 77
338 issues +

HY

SECRET ORIGINS

This excellent series reprinted golden and silver age origins of DC's best known heroes. Recommended are 1 (Batman, Superman and the earth 1 Flash), 6 (Blackhawks and the LSH) and especially issue 5 which has both parts of the golden age Spectre's origin.

DC
Feb 73-Nov 74
7 issues

1,5,6.

DWC

SECRET SIX

Six people with different backgrounds and abilities were brought together by a mysterious person named Mockingbird to destroy evil doers beyond the reach of the law. Mockingbird had helped each of the six in the past and their livelihoods still lay in his group. This was a fine espionage series written by E. Nelson Bridwell, which had a nice twist - one of the six was Mockingbird, but who?

DC
May 68-May 69
7 issues

HY

SECRET SOCIETY OF SUPER VILLAINS

One of the most enjoyable series of recent years. Originally assembled to battle Darkseid, the Society was later led in turn by a Stan Lee clone named Funky Flashman, Gorilla Grodd and the Wizard, each with his own master plan. They were relentlessly opposed by Captain Comet. Although not a humour book, scripts were handled none too seriously by Gerry Conway and Bob Rozakis and, while lacking in depth and still providing the requisite amounts of action, this was a really fun comic. Plot threads are tied up in JLA 166-168.

DC
Jun 76-Jul 78
15 issues
1 Special 77

1-6,8,9,11,13,15.
Special 77.

FP

SECRETS OF THE HAUNTED HOUSE

Nothing here to give your spine a chill, although there were a few horror stories with nice art eg. 10, with Mike Golden art. A fairly interesting mystery series starring Mr E (who's blind) has appeared from 31.

DC
May 75-Jan 76(5)
Jul 77-Nov 78(14)
From Aug 79
34 issues +

HY

SHADE THE CHANGING MAN

A trans-dimensional espionage agent, Rac Shade, is outlawed in his own dimension,

DC
Jul 77-Sep 78
8 issues

Meta. His unique M-vest makes fear-distorted images of himself real. Shade sets out to prove his innocence on Meta. Steve Ditko drew and plotted the book, which was cancelled in mid-flight during DC's cutbacks in 1978. The art is some of Ditko's best, and Mike Fleisher's scripts weave neatly around the vastly complex plotlines. Compulsive stuff.

3-5.

SW

THE SHADOW

Imagine the Shadow: the 1930's, foggy nights, the blazing 45's - one of the great pulp heroes. Well the Archie Shadow runs around in blue and green underwear chasing panel borders and punching word balloons. Stories recycled the same plot, dialogue was sub-Crossroads and the art wasn't too good either. One of the worst comics ever published; treat it like the bubonic plague.

ARCHIE
Aug 64-Sep 65
8 issues

DWC

THE SHADOW

A series set in the 1930's about the mysterious all-powerful avenger and his underground organisation. Denny O'Neil superbly adapted the old pulp hero to comic form and there was fantastic period art by Mike Kaluta in 1-4 and 6. Other artists included Frank Robbins and E.R. Cruz who both suited the series as well. The Kaluta illustrated issues are all classics, but 6, "Night of the Ninja" particularly stands out.

DC
Nov 73-May 75
12 issues

1-12.

HY

SHANNA THE SHE-DEVIL

Despite being another of Marvel's ill-fated attempts at producing "Women's Lib" comics written by women, this series is better than its counterparts (though this isn't saying much). Shanna O'Hara was a normal American woman who became so disillusioned with man's cruelty to both man and beast alike that she divorced herself from civilisation (with the exception of lipstick) and decided to become a female Tarzan imitation in the African jungle. After a distinctly stereotyped first 3 issues by Carole Seuling, Steve Gerber came to the rescue in issue 4 by launching the Mandrill/Nekra storyline which blossomed into its full glory in Daredevil 108-112.

MARVEL
Dec 72-Aug 73
5 issues

APS

SHAZAM

This was a nice try at reviving the original Captain Marvel and Family. Although they weren't as good as the golden age stories, the earlier issues of this new series did come close, due to the influence of C.G.Beck's art. A lot of stories were well produced, but were probably too light-hearted and simple for today's audience. This explains the change of direction that came about with issue 34, when Captain Marvel took on a more realistic look. This change was too late to save the book, but the feature continues in Worlds Finest Comics.

DC
Feb 73-Jun 78
35 issues

HY

SHE-HULK

A painful case of Marvel's vogue for incest, the She-Hulk is actually Jennifer Walters, a cousin of Bruce Banner who, through a string of coincidences, is given a blood transfusion from the Hulk's alter ego, with obvious results. Whereas Spider-Woman has managed to rise above its derivative origin, She-Hulk remains as embarrassing as its concept is. David Kraft's writing treats the character with the disdain it deserves.

MARVEL
From Feb 80
14 issues +

DWC

SHERLOCK HOLMES

Denny O'Neill wrote this adaptation of fiction's best known detective and managed a fair job, as did E.R.Cruz on the art. The book was only published to retain DC's copyright on the title, which results in a somewhat bland product.

DC
Oct 75
1 issue

DWC

SHOGUN WARRIORS

A long hidden group of scientists recruited three humans to combat a long hidden group of black magicians, using giant robots. Stories are by Doug Moench and Herb Trimpe and rarely aspire to weak. Plotlines are concluded in FF 226.

MARVEL
Feb 79-Sep 80
20 issues

FF

SHOWCASE

As is obvious from the title, this was a varied comic, showcasing many different features, many of which were later granted their own series (though only Flash, Green Lantern, and Sgt Rock are still running).

Actual series worth getting include: the Inferior 5 (62,63,65), the great humorous super group, the Creeper by Ditko in 73, Anthro in 74, a great light hearted caveman feature, Hawk and the Dove by Ditko again in 75, Batlash in 76, Dolphin (79), a mysterious girl who could live underwater, Nightmaster (82-84), one of the first sword and sorcery features, the new, revived Doom Patrol in 94-96, Power Girl of the JSA in 97-99 and Hawkman in 101-103. Issue 100 teamed nearly all the characters that had ever appeared in Showcase.

DC
Apr 56-Sep 70(93)
Sep 77-Sep 78
104 issues

62,63,65,73-76,79,
82-84,94-96,101-103.

HY

SILVER SURFER

A being unique in the universe, trapped on earth by his former master and creator, Galactus. Armed with the power cosmic and a surfboard that sails the currents of air and space, our chromed hero battles for acceptance on a world he never made. Stan Lee's most controversial character took on a new look as a result of being awarded his own book (after having been featured in occasional Fantastic Four stories for 2 years). Within 4 issues he had become a leaner, less muscular character who rarely used his cosmic powers, but tended to moralise about violence and alienation a lot, finally coming to some angry conclusions. Some of Lee's best scripts are accompanied by some fine pencils from John

MARVEL
Aug 68-Sep 70
18 issues

4,8,9,18.

THE

CREEPER



Buscema in all but the Surfer's final issue, drawn by his creator, Jack Kirby. Along with Spider-man, the Silver Surfer revolutionised all the subsequent ideas as to what superhero strips were all about.

SW

SKULL

Vietnam veteran Jim Scully and the passengers of a small charter plane are sucked back in time in the Bermuda Triangle. With many dinosaurs about, survival was the name of the game; something the castaways learn the hard way from Scully.

This was a nice comic marred by a messy change of scripters (from Wolfman to Englehart to Mantlo). The continuity in 3,4 and 5 was so compromised that sales plummeted. Mantlo's writing and some consistent artwork in 5-8 make for some good reading and 1 and 2 by Wolfman and Gan are great.

Cancelled in mid-flight, this strip deserved a far better conclusion than Marvel Two-in-One 35-36.

SW

SON OF SATAN

Literally the son of Satan, Daimon Hellstrom's strip was a curious fusion of superhero and horror elements that never quite meshed. Highly rated by those who like it, but vacuous and insubstantial to my mind. The character also appeared in Marvel Spotlight 12-24 and currently stars with the Defenders.

FP

SPACE 1999

This book tended to follow the TV series, with a new planet and a company in danger every issue and was therefore somewhat predictable. Characterisation was sketchy, but most of the stories managed to catch the spirit of the TV show, particularly the John Byrne issues.

DWC

SPECIAL MARVEL EDITION

The first four issues were reprints of Lee/Kirby Thor tales and were giant sized. The comic reverted to normal size with 5 and a series of Sgt Fury reprints appeared in alternate months to those in his own title until 14. Issues 15 and 16 contained the first two Shang-Chi stories and the title changed to Master of Kung-Fu with 17.

FP

SPECTRE

Supernatural criminals are battled by detective Jim Corrigan and his ghostly alter ego, the Spectre. Following 3 much heralded appearances in Showcase (60,61,64), the astral avenger was awarded his own comic. The first issue is by his Showcase team of Gardner Fox and Murphy Anderson; Anderson, however, left the strip to a fledgling Neal Adams to draw. After a 4 issue battle to find a scripter Adams left the strip in the

MARVEL
Aug 75-Nov 76
8 issues

1,2,6-8.

MARVEL
Dec 75-Feb 77
8 issues

CHARLTON
Nov 75-Nov 76
7 issues

3-6.

MARVEL
Jan 71-Feb 74
16 issues

DC
Nov 67-May 69
10 issues

3-5.

hands of god knows who. The last five issues have little to offer. Berni Wrightson drew a short feature in 10. The Spectre was later revived in Adventure Comics 431-440, written by Mike Fleisher.

SW

SPIDER-MAN

Spider-man was Stan Lee's now classic attempt to create a superhero in a completely opposite vein to the Superman type. Weak by superhero standards and fallible in almost every department, Spider-man is the easiest hero for the reader to identify with. Lee quickly discovered that Spider-man was at his best in down to earth situations and so set about writing him accordingly. Many of his battles were against non-super powered villains (eg the New York underworld) or villains with fairly minor powers. His wise cracking fight dialogue was also superbly developed and still stands way above all today's hackneyed imitations. Steve Ditko was an essential part of the formation of Spider-man's early character; basically his art made him look spidery and his exquisite use of shadow suited the book perfectly. When Ditko left in 38 it seemed as though he took part of Lee with him. Although the standard of scripting remained above average for a while, it was always on the downward trend and gaps between the excellent issues became longer and longer. The book desperately needed a major change, but didn't get it until 1972. First Lee relinquished the scripting reins to Gerry Conway and then, 1 year later, girlfriend Gwen Stacy and arch-villain Green Goblin were killed in 121 and 122. These events precipitated the most consistently excellent period of Spidey's career, topped by the superlative Jackal war running intermittently through to 150. Ever since, the strip has deteriorated to a completely standardised formula under Wein, Wolfman and now O'Neil.

APS

SPIDER-WOMAN

Marv Wolfman handled the writing for the first 8 issues and produced a very uneven run of stories, due mainly to his attempts to make the character different from Spider-man. With issue 9 Mark Gruenwald started writing the book and turned in some unusual (18 - "Sins of the Flesh") and macabre (9 - "Eye of the Needle", a mini classic) stories whilst getting away from the heroine in bondage look of early issues. With 20 both Gruenwald and artist Carmine Infantino left the book and Michael Fleisher took over to produce a disappointing dozen issues which were not helped by a rotating series of artists and a heavy lack of direction. With 34 Chris Claremont and Steve Leialoha became the permanent creative team on the book and the title has begun to improve rapidly, with many of the Claremont hallmarks such as subplots, good characterisation and a regular supporting cast becoming apparent.

DWC

SPIRIT

Will Eisner's newspaper character is arguably the best comic material ever written and these two issues were published in an excellent, giant size, no ads format. They

MARVEL

From Mar 63
214 issues +
14 Annuals 64-71,
73,76-80.
5 GS Jul 74-Jul 75
=====

15,17-21,26,27,30-33,38-40,47,50,63-65,82,121-125,127-150,153,174,175,194,195,201,202,
GS 4.

MARVEL

From Apr 78
36 issues +
=====

9,18,34,35.

HARVEY

Oct 66-Mar 67
2 issues
=====

1,2.

both reprinted six stories together with one new story. Issue 1 had a James Bond spoof and issue 2 told the life story of the Octopus. A third issue was printed in black and white, but was only distributed to subscribers.

DWC

STALKER

A rather pleasant little series concerning a man who made a bargain with a demon: his soul in exchange for combat skills, a bargain that left him totally devoid of emotion. Paul Levitz scripted and the art by Steve Ditko and Wally Wood suited the eldritch feel of the series. It's also complete in itself as a four parter.

DC
Jul 75-Jan 76
4 issues

FP

STARFIRE

A sword and sorcery series about a slave who attempted to free her world from alien invaders. It could have been nice, but lacked direction and, not wanting to be sexist, Starfire didn't seem to have enough strength to file her nails, let alone fight with a sword.

DC
Sep 76-Nov 77
8 issues

HY

STAR HUNTERS

After an introductory appearance in DC Super Stars 16, this bunch of space travellers were launched into their own series. A corrupt government infected the crew with a disease which prevented them remaining on earth. The price of a cure was that the team obtain an artifact which related the origin of mankind. A great comic by David Michelinie, flawed only by the fact that the book was cancelled in the DC implosion before the last chapter appeared.

DC
Nov 77-Nov 78
7 issues

1-7.

FP

STAR SPANGLED WAR STORIES

This was always an interesting war title. Its series have included Mlle Marie, France's underground war heroine, in 87-89 and The War That Time Forgot in 90-137. This was an unusual feature pitting soldiers against dinosaurs, but it worked well. Enemy Ace, Germany's WW1 flying ace appeared in 138-150, 181-183 and 200, but the comic is best remembered for the Unknown Soldier, an American whose face was hideously scarred and who assumed various secret identities to become a secret agent. Always a good series, the best story is David Michelinie's debut in 183, "8000 to One". The title changed to Unknown Soldier with 205.

DC
Oct 41-Mar 77
204 issues

165, 169, 177, 178,
180, 183-194.

STAR TREK

The series began with Marv Wolfman's 3 part adaptation of the film; since then Marty Pasko has managed to catch the style of Star Trek very well. Characterisation has been good, but early issues suffered from some of Dave Cockrum's most uninspired art. As a whole the

MARVEL
From Apr 80
12 issues +

title has a certain predictability due to its going where the TV series has been before. Most of the later issues, particularly those with Walt Simonson art, are good reading.

DWC

STAR WARS

The first 6 issues by Roy Thomas and Howie Chaykin saw a faithful adaptation of the George Lucas film and, hungry as the public was for Star Wars material, sales were unprecedented. Archie Goodwin wrote the following issues and, although restrained by the fact that a second Star Wars film was due, his scripting was inventive, featuring a droid world and a 6' talking rabbit among other things. Carmine Infantino drew most issues after 12, but 23, a particularly nice comic, was the work of Walt Simonson. It involved a bounty hunter with a pathological hatred of robots. With the exception of 30, succeeding issues have been good reading, but not exceptional. The adaptation of The Empire Strikes Back by Archie Goodwin was in 38-44, with Al Williamson art giving it a nice 1940's feel.

TP/FP

STEEL

Gerry Conway's attempt to emulate the then current fads of bionics and WW2 was one of the more deserving victims of the DC implosion. Clichéd plots and Don Heck art added up to an extremely vapid product which is best forgotten.

DC
Mar 78-Nov 78
5 issues

DWC

STRANGE ADVENTURES

A varied adventure comic, it offered both science fiction and mystery stories. One of the best series here was the Atomic Knights, set in the future after a nuclear war, by John Broome and Murphy Anderson in 117-160. Other series have included Space Museum, the Enchantress, Animal Man, Immortal Man and Star Hawkins, a very nice light hearted series about a private eye and his robot secretary. The most famous series to appear here was also the last, Deadman. It concerned a murdered circus performer whose ghost was able to possess living bodies in order to hunt for his murderer. The first appearance (205) was drawn by Carmine Infantino, with Neal Adams continuing until the book went reprint with 217. The reprints all featured Adam Strange (with a new story in 222) and the Atomic Knights appeared in 217-231.

DC
Sep 50-Nov 73
244 issues
=====

182,183,205-216.

HY

STRANGE SPORTS STORIES

This was Julie Schwartz's pet project about sports stories with a science fiction base. This knockout comic sailed along quite well and didn't need a kick-start. It had a lot of balls going for it with stories and art down to a tee. A nice comic to net, it didn't dive in quality. Worth racing or wrestling for.

DC
Oct 73-Aug 74
6 issues

HY



STRANGE TALES

Strange Tales was the oldest Marvel comic to survive the superhero era; the first 100 issues all featured weird/horror stories.

Human Torch 101-134, Annual 2

Of all the corny and hackneyed strips in the early 60's, this one must surely take the cake. One gets the impression that Lee and Leiber deliberately wrote it in a juvenile strain in order to attract younger readers. The series is marvellous from a nostalgic point of view due to the amount of well-established Marvel villains who made their first appearances here. The Thing co-starred from 124 onwards. These issues are, in general, the worst as the stories degenerated into non stop wise cracking sequences.

Dr Strange 110,111,114-168

Dr Strange began as a weird/fantasy back-up feature and won his own series a few issues later because of his popularity. His best adventure by far was the extensive battle against Dormammu. This ran virtually uninterrupted from 126-146, although the latter few issues are essentially epilogues and are a bit drawn out. Lee's scripts were enhanced by Ditko's pencils; his depiction of alien dimensions and rendition of the various spells was a major factor in the strip's success. Thereafter the stories deteriorated; despite the continued plotlines, they seem contrived and over-complicated when compared with the Dormammu sequence, especially as writers and artists were chopped and changed.

Nick Fury, Agent of SHIELD 135-168

This series started off in the pits but constantly improved very slightly throughout its course. Marvel's well established WW2 hero was transformed into a James Bond character in an up to date setting. The plots relied on an abundance of "scientific" gadgets popping up wherever convenient and, as such, were very cliched. 144 saw the first noticeable improvement, with Jasper Sitwell's naive innocence and inexperience providing an amusing contrast to Fury's blunt, coarse and raucous personality. The quality stepped up again with 150 as Steranko took over from Lee, but his plots were muddled, despite the refreshingly different art.

After 168 the title diverged into 2 books: Nick Fury and Dr Strange (1), with the numbering continuing in the latter. In 1973 however, Strange Tales was reinstated with the numbering commencing from 169. 169-173 introduced Brother Voodoo, aka Jericho Drumm, who mastered the voodoo arts to gain revenge on a Houngan who had killed his brother. Thinly disguised by the voodoo decorations, the plots are poor and the character's powers boil down to create fire, fire resistance, teleportation and the ability to control others mentally. Definitely not one of Wein's best efforts, this strip continues in Tales of the Zombie 6. 174,176 and 177 contained a storyline about a legendary humanoid statue called the Golem who came to life to serve the forces of good. The fact that it was cancelled after 3 issues says everything that needs to be said. 178-181 featured Jim Starlin's version of Adam Warlock. Starlin immediately plunged him into a cosmic epic of the type he was so suited to; pitting him against the Magus, an alter ego of Warlock 5000 years in the future. Amongst the many factors which made this strip shine were the subtleties and hidden meanings within the script - spot them if you can. The story continues in Warlock 9. Dr Strange reprints from issues 130-141 served as Strange Tales' swansong.

MARVEL

Jun 51-May 68(168)
Sep 73-Nov 76
188 issues
2 annuals 62,63

126,127,130-141,
146,178-181.

SUB-MARINER

The first 36 issues or so, all written by Roy Thomas, suffered from a severe lack of continuity with the exception of the Serpent Crown stories (1,6-13). Otherwise, plots consisted of villains (eg Krang and Orka) cheering on their super-powered lackeys against Namor or of several ecology based episodes. Eventually, in 37, Lady Dorma, Sub-Mariner's fiancée, was killed and Namor renounced his throne, thus forcing writers to think up new plots.

Gerry Conway took over the scripting chores with 40 and, after a few forgettable issues, produced two very good three-parters in which Namor found and lost his father and then aided Dr Doom against Modok. With 50, Bill Everett, Sub-Mariner's creator, assumed scripting and pencilling and turned out typical 50's plots. Steve Gerber took over with 58 and added continuity, new supporting characters and explored the excesses of violence perpetrated by Atlanteans towards outsiders. His excellence, however, slowly declined with Namor's greater involvement with the surface world. Overall, the series had excellent potential which was only realised for a few brief sequences.

JFG

SUGAR AND SPIKE

This comic by Sheldon Mayer was obviously aimed at younger readers, but I'm sure the older ones appreciated it more. Sugar and Spike were two babies who conversed in baby talk and got involved in various comic adventures. Don't be afraid to give this comic a go. The stories aren't that childish and they're all good fun.

HY

SUPERBOY (1)

This was an entertaining comic during the 1960's and it featured all the staples of the Superman line of comics at the time, eg Phantom Zone villains, Lex Luthor, trying to maintain his secret identity, kryptonite etc. They were basically stories about a younger version of Superman and they didn't explore the adolescent side of his nature. By the early 70's, the stories had improved and the Legion of Super-Heroes had become a semi regular back-up strip prior to their occupation of the title.

HY

SUPERBOY (2)

With the Legion of Super-Heroes finally ousting Superboy from his original title (he'd had no solo tales there in 7 years) he was moved into a new title after a few appearances in Adventure had proved successful. Cary Bates's scripting harkens back to the simple old DC style of comics. All quite good, if somewhat trivial.

FP

SUPERBOY AND THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES

The stories after the LSH had taken over the old Superboy title were by the same team of Cary Bates and Dave Cockrum that had been

MARVEL

May 68-Sep 74
72 issues
2 annuals 71,72

9-13,44-49,58-62.

DC

May 56-Nov 71
96 issues

DC

Apr 59-Jul 73
196 issues
1 annual 64

136,167-173,175-
184, 186-196.

DC

From Jan 80
15 issues +
1 annual 80

DC
(197)Sep 73-Dec 79
258 issues

producing the back-up series. 197-203 are all worthwhile and 204 saw Mike Grell become regular artist. The strip improved further when the Legion's old scripter from Adventure, Jim Shooter, returned to alternate with Bates. With 225 Paul Levitz became scripter and the excellent James Sherman became artist, making the series even more popular. Levitz's creative peak was the "Earthwar Saga" that appeared in 241-245, drawn by Sherman and later Joe Staton. Jim Starlin also produced three good stories in 239, 250 and 251, but the quality sunk when Gerry Conway took over as writer, declining into mediocrity. Apparently this didn't affect the sales though, and the title changed to the Legion of Super-Heroes with 259, with Superboy leaving both the Legion and his old title.

197-203, 209-213,
219-221, 223-230,
231-247, 250, 251.

HY

SUPER FRIENDS

This series, based on the TV cartoon adventures, is definitely not DC's version of Spidey Super Stories. Although primarily aimed at a younger audience with simple stories (by E. Nelson Bridwell) it is in fact an older DC fan's delight. The continuity with the DC universe is marvellous, featuring such characters as the Black Orchid, Nubia (Wonder Woman's black sister), and T.N.T. and Dyna-mite - remember them from the 40's? Bridwell has also created an interesting range of international superheroes. I strongly recommend that you give this comic a go.

DC
From Nov 76
42 issues +

HY

SUPERGIRL

After successful series in Action and Adventure, Supergirl was finally given her own title, and what an insult it was. The stories, which were very romance oriented, were stupid and the art was distinctly unimpressive. The Zatanna back-ups don't even deserve a mention.

DC
Nov 72-Jan 74(9)
Oct 74
10 issues

HY

SUPERMAN

The hero that started it all in the 1930's was in good form in the 1960's. All those concepts usually associated with the Superman legend (kryptonite, Phantom Zone etc) were used to great effect, especially in imaginary stories such as the classic "Death of Superman" in 149. Most stories weren't exactly senses shattering, but you were always entertained.

The 70's saw a drastic change when Julie Schwartz became editor and made the stories more serious. This new look began in 233, when all kryptonite on earth was destroyed and Clark Kent became a TV newscaster, courtesy of Denny O'Neil and Curt Swan. The character of Clark Kent was also explored in a new feature entitled "the Private Life of Clark Kent". The comic continued to offer good stories, with the next memorable event occurring in 296-299, which took a long look at the Clark Kent/Lois Lane/Superman triangle. There was a nice period between 310 and 335, written by Marty Pasko, who further developed the Superman/Lois Lane relationship and brought back Lana Lang, with very

DC
From Summer 39
357 issues +
8 annuals 60-64
1 spectacular 77

134, 149, 159, 161, 163,
164, 167, 168, 170, 184,
188, 189, 194, 199, 200,
205, 215, 224, 228-231,
233-238, 240-243, 247,
249, 250, 254, 286, 296-
300, 306, 310-324, 327-
335, 338, 349, Spect-
acular 77.

interesting results. Other notable events included the enlargement of the bottle city of Kandor in 338 and a well produced Superman spectacular in 1977. Overall this comic has given and continues to give the best kind of comic entertainment around.

HY

SUPERMAN FAMILY

This giant sized comic carried on the numbering from Jimmy Olsen and from 164-181 it was mostly reprint with a new lead feature which alternated between Jimmy Olsen, Lois Lane and Supergirl. It went to all new material on becoming a dollar comic with 182, featuring the three series above and a few new series, such as the witty Krypto (182-192), Nightwing and Flamebird (182-194) set in the bottle city of Kandor, and the most impressive Mr and Mrs Superman, which has appeared from 195. It stars the earth 2 Superman, who has married Lois Lane, and is set in the 50's. On the whole the three main features have been fairly disappointing apart from a few exceptions (the Supergirl/New Doom Patrol team-up in 191-193). There is a lot of opportunity to enhance the Superman legend here, but it doesn't appear to be happening.

HY

SUPERNATURAL THRILLERS

The first run of this title adapted various supernatural stories, all of which are worth looking at. Of note are "It" (issue 1) by Roy Thomas and "Valley of the Worm" (3) by Thomas and Gerry Conway. The Living Mummy first appeared in and assumed complete control over the feature on its reinstatement with 7. N'Kantu, king of an African tribe, was captured by conquering Egyptian factions and embalmed alive, only to emerge as the Living Mummy with a steel hard exterior in 1973. The series concentrates on the characterisations of the mortals aiding the Mummy against 4 invading, alien Elementals and fails to rise to really high quality because of the incompatibility of the supernatural and human components. Although scripted by a bewildering juggle of people (Gerber, Isabella, Wein and Warner), the series is graced by the fine pencils of Val Mayerik in all but the final issue.

JFG/SW

SUPER STAR HOLIDAY SPECIAL

As with the earlier 5 Star Superhero Spectacular, this was a one shot dollar comic that contained 5 separate tales of DC strips. This time featuring Batman, the LSH, Jonah Hex, Sgt Rock and 3 mystery tales linked by a framing sequence. All the stories featured the star over Bethlehem and they were all very good. A comic worth getting and if you're still not convinced, Frank Miller drew the Batman tale.

FP

SUPER TEAM FAMILY

Despite a silly name, this giant sized comic featured superhero team-ups that were better than the average Superman or Batman team-up tales. Issues 1,4-7 were all reprint, the most notable being the Justice Society tale from All Star 32 in 4. The new material began in 8 with a well produced revival of the Challengers of the Unknown. 11-14 have various team-ups

DC
(164)From May 74
206 issues +

MARVEL
Dec 72-Nov 73(6)
Jul 74-Oct 75
15 issues

3,7,8,11.

DC
April 80
1 issue

Apr 80 issue.

DC
Nov 75-Apr 78
15 issues

8-15.



J. Friedman
X 80

connected with a central storyline involving the Atom and 15 offered the Flash and the New Gods. A lot of good stuff.

HY

SUPER-VILLAIN TEAM-UP

Featuring Dr Doom and Sub-Mariner in all but 6 issues, this series has been very erratic in quality. Some of the best were by Steve Englehart, including 5-7, which had the premiere appearance and origin of his tribute to Batman, the Shroud. Issue 4 crosses over with Marvel Spotlight (1) 27 and 8-10 cross over with Avengers 154-156. 9 has art by Jim Shooter. Although cancelled, the title was revived as an annual publication solely to retain the copyright on the term "Super-Villain". The last 2 issues featured the Red Skull and the Hate Monger.

MARVEL
Aug 75-Oct 77(14)
Nov 78, May 79, Jun 80
17 issues
2 GS Mar-Jun 75

4-7.

DWC

SWAMP THING

A series very highly rated by fandom and winner of several ACBA awards for the original creative team of Len Wein and Berni Wrightson (1-10). Alex Holland fell into a swamp while aflame and soaked with chemicals and emerged as a creature more plant than man, with immense strength and regenerative abilities. Despite the contention of every comics fan that this is a great series, the reason completely escapes me. "Night of the Bat" in 7 is a moody masterpiece, but everything else seems no more than average and the early issues certainly don't overshadow later issues by David Michelinie and Nestor Redondo. Buy the reprint annuals before snapping the over priced originals.

DC
Nov 72-Sep 76
24 issues
4 annuals 77-80

7,12.

FP

SWORD OF SORCERY

Probably the best sword and sorcery series ever done in comics, this starred Fritz Leiber's Fafhrd the Barbarian and the Gray Mouser in superb stories written by Denny O'Neil with great art by Howard Chaykin, Walt Simonson and Jim Starlin.

DC
Mar 73-Dec 73
5 issues

1-5.

HY

TALES OF ASGARD

Featuring a mind-boggling 10 stories (must be some kind of record), this one-off, 64 page book reprinted the back-ups of the same name from Journey into Mystery (1) 97-106.

MARVEL
Oct 68
1 issue

APS

TALES OF EVIL

Starting off as an ordinary horror mag containing the usual Atlas overdose of gore, Tales of Evil eventually produced 2 mundane stars in its third issue. Bog Beast is a self-explanatory rip-off and Man-Monster was yet another man turned into beast strip. Not recommended.

ATLAS
Feb 75-Jul 75
3 issues

FP

TALES OF GHOST CASTLE

A short lived comic offering average mystery stories. Nothing impressive here.

DC
Jun 75-Oct 75
3 issues

HY

TALES OF SUSPENSE

MARVEL

Jan 59-Mar 68
99 issues

Iron Man 39-99

All but a few of the Iron Man stories were written by Lee and the early ones in particular are very crude. They mostly consist of Tony Stark fighting the communists, modifying his armour and almost dying every other issue because his life-supporting armour needed recharging. None of them can be described as good, but 57,60 64 (all Black Widow and Hawkeye) 73-86 and 95-99 are the best; the latter run introducing Whitney Frost (Big M). This plotline continues into Iron Man and Sub-Mariner 1.

Captain America 59-99

Also written by Lee, this series suffers from an abundance of clichés, reminiscences back to WW2 and of Bucky Barnes hallucinations and androids. Issues 64-71 consist entirely of Cap narrating some of his WW exploits. All issues should be avoided with the exception of 66 (origin of the Red Skull), 77, 79-81 (fairly good Red Skull tale introducing the cosmic cube) and 92-94 (passable AIM story with the first appearance of Modok). Captain America continues with his name becoming the title of the comic from 100.

Tales of Suspense also features a Tales of the Watcher series in 49-58 which mainly consisted of the Watcher narrating morality stories of himself and/or other alien races.

APS

TALES TO ASTONISH (1)

MARVEL

Jan 59-Mar 68
101 issues

Ant/Giant Man 27,35-69

Hank Pym's story in issue 27 was a better than average weird story about a man who invented a shrinking serum. It proved to be so popular that the character returned in 35. From 44 onwards, he was joined by the Wasp (Janet Van Dyne) who became first his partner and then his girlfriend. In 49 he developed the ability to increase his height as well and he became generally known as Giant Man, although he could still shrink. All the stories were very simplistic, but by far the most redeeming aspect of the series was the mature relationship between Hank and Jan; it was virtually the only one in all the early 60's Marvel comics not to involve love triangles and repeated misunderstandings. Nearly all the tales are single issue stories; some of the best being in 44,55 and 65.

Hulk 60-101

These early Hulk tales were very different for the time, as they featured many continued stories; in fact he spent 25 of his 42 issue run fighting 3 villains (Leader, Secret Empire and Boomerang). Although he created the Hulk, like many other writers, Lee seemed to have no idea what to do with him. He has probably had proportionately more fight scene pages than any other character and the rest of each issue consisted entirely of General Ross' attempts to kill/capture him. There were no outstanding issues, but 73,74 (last 2 Leader issues) and 93-96 were the best.

Sub-Mariner 70-101

These stories never generated much excitement, mainly because of the lack of variety. Nearly all the plots involved Namor battling either Krang or Byrrah for the throne of Atlantis or fighting insipid alien/undersea monsters. The only issue of interest is the last which introduces Destiny and the Serpent Crown of Lemuria. This story continues in Iron Man and Sub-Mariner 1.

The comic title changed to Hulk with 102.

APS

TALES TO ASTONISH (2)

This is a cheap way of picking up reprints of the first 14 issues of Sub-Mariner.

MARVEL
Dec 79-Jan 81
14 issues

APS

TARGITT

Targitt was a vigilante with an ever present gun and was the star of this truly terrible series. It's only worth buying to laugh at the pillock on the letters page of issue 3, who compared it with the Spirit and predicted that Targitt would surpass Spiderman in popularity.

ATLAS
Mar 75-Jul 75
3 issues

FP

TARZAN

The first 206 issues were under the Gold Key imprint, with the DC issues starting with 207. This was a well-produced adaptation of Edgar Rice-Burrough's most famous character by Joe Kubert. Kubert, who also drew many of the earlier DC issues, kept the jungle theme fairly interesting, which is more than either Gold Key or Marvel did. 207-210 adapt the origin story and particularly stand out. They also have John Carter back-ups. A good comic to beat your chest with.

DC
Jan 48-Feb 77
258 issues

207-210.

HY

TARZAN

Tarzan is Tarzan and there's nothing new that can be done with the character. Marvel didn't even try. All pretty mundane stuff and not worth getting unless you're a real Rice-Burrough's freak or a John Buscema fan.

MARVEL
Jun 77-Oct 79
29 issues
3 annuals 77-79

FP

TARZAN FAMILY

Carrying on the numbering from Korak, this giant sized title upheld the fine tradition of DC adaptations of E.R. Burrough's famous character. It featured all new tales of Korak, John Carter and Pellucidar and some reprints, the best being Russ Manning's Tarzan.

DC
(60) Dec 75-Dec 76
66 issues

HY

TEEN TITANS

Robin, Kid Flash and Aqualad shared an adventure in Brave and Bold 54 and another 2 with Wonder Girl before being given their own title. The early stories portrayed the Titans as approximately 13 years old in order to appeal to that age-group and they fought such enthralling menaces as Ding Dong Daddy and the Mad Mod in some really embarrassing tales by Bob Haney. Neal Adams drew 20-22 and the Titans grew up slightly. In 25, scripted by Steve Skeates, the Titans met Mr Jupiter, head of a research foundation, and began working for him. Bob Haney took over again in 32 and produced some excellent mystery tales (albeit with terrible dialogue), in which the Titans encountered witches, demons and arcane objects. These issues were extremely well drawn by either Nick Cardy or George Tuska. When the book was revived, Bob Rozakis handled the scripts and he once again aimed them at early teens and in a few years time they'll be just as laughable as the early issues.

DC
Feb 66-Feb 73(43)
Nov 76-Feb 78
53 issues

32-43.

FP

TEX DAWSON

Reprinted from a fifties series, Tex Dawson was a western hero who "rode the western range with his fighting pals Whirlwind and Lightning". Whirlwind was a horse and Lightning was a wolf and Dawson talks to them both. An all time low in westerns with bad art and predictable plots. Were kids really that naive once?

FP

THOR

The numbering continues from Journey into Mystery (1). Long spells of mediocrity have dogged this book. 126-133 are quite interesting and 134,135 (first High Evolutionary) and 136 distinguish themselves. With the exception of a period from 158-170 (featuring Him (Warlock) and the origin of Galactus (168,169)), the rest of Lee's issues up to 194 can be disregarded. No imagination in plotlines is evidenced at all. Gerry Conway took over and his scripting was very erratic. 195-203 conclude very disappointingly and incoherently and 208-220 seemed to meander with no end in sight. 221-228 provide a welcome relief and are definitely worth considering, but even they paled into insignificance in comparison with 231-236 which feature uncharacteristically first-rate dialogue and beautifully interwoven subplots. An excellent Len Wein four parter appeared in 242-245, but after that the book fell back into turgid mediocrity with all the (by now) cliched plots brought out for another airing. There was a quest, a search for Odin, a battle with the Destroyer and Loki took over Asgard yet again. Thank god for two good annuals during this period.

Roy Thomas began scripting with 272 and immediately began reconciling the Thor of myth and legend with Marvel's version and relating the origin of Asgard. Helped along, and later taken over by Mark Gruenwald and Ralph Macchio, this took 30 issues and encompassed the Eternals, Wagner's "Siegfried" opera and three fine fill-in issues in 279-281. Despite some slow periods this was a fine series overall and requires reading in its entirety to be fully appreciated. The following issues have all been good, with Doug Moench's poignant tale of a priest questioning his faith in 303 and the return of Gabriel in 305 being the best.

APS/FP

THUNDER AGENTS

Thunder Agents were really like Shield, although besides the agents there were also three super-heroes: Dynamo - the guy with the super strength belt, Noman - the multi bodied android and Menthor, a mind-reader. The writing was always puerile, but the title's great strength lay in the artists, who included Gil Kane, Wally Wood, Reed Crandall and Steve Ditko.

DWC

TIGERMAN

Scientist Dr Hill injected himself with tiger chromosomes to give himself the strength and agility of a tiger. He fought crime in New York and looked a right jerk. Decidedly mundane.

MARVEL

Jan 73-Jun 73
3 issues

MARVEL

(126)From Mar 66
305 issues +
7 annuals 66,70,71,
76-79.
1 GS 75.

134-136,231-236,
242-245,274,279-
282,300,301,303-
305,Annual 6.

TOWER

Nov 65-Dec 67(17)
Sep 68-Nov 68(19)
Nov 69
20 issues

1-8.

ATLAS

Apr 75-Sep 75
3 issues

FP

METAMORPHO

The ELEMENT MAN



DELAPENA

TIME WARP

Another attempt at creating an SF anthology similar to the horror format, this dollar comic featured many good individual tales, but the book as a whole suffered from predictable plots and cliched endings. The best stories appeared in the earlier issues, particularly issue 2.

DWC

TOMAHAWK

The adventures of a rebel band of Rangers during the American war of Independence. This title hails from the start of the 50's and with scripts by the likes of Bill Finger and drab art by Fred Ray, you'd think that you were still there. Progress finally came with a new look for Tomahawk: Neal Adams covers, stories by Bob Kanigher and Frank Thorne art, all of which led to a drop in sales. Experiments continued with Hawk, son of Tomahawk, set 30 years after the earlier stories. This shared the title with some choice reprints and Joe Kubert's beautiful Firehair strip. Any issue after 116 is worth a look, before that, forget it.

SW

TOMB OF DARKNESS

More reprints of 80's horror stories, the first 8 issues being titled Beware. The only issue of interest is 22. The lead character's name in one of the reprints has been relettered as "Pym". This is chronologically considered as the first story about Hank Pym.

DC
Sep 50-May 72
140 issues

MARVEL
(9)Jul 74-Nov 76
23 issues

FP/APS

TOMB OF DRACULA

Marvel have a knack of taking a fad or a cliché and turning it into a worthwhile comic. Such was the case with Dracula. The first 6 issues by Conway, Goodwin and Fox introduced some supporting characters without developing Dracula from the cinema cliché. Marv Wolfman became regular writer with 7, joining artist Gene Colan, and Tom Palmer became inker with 12. It was a team that lasted until the book was cancelled. Wolfman fleshed out the regular cast, introduced Blade, Quincy Harker and the concept of Drac's diary and gave Dracula the character of a man who knew what he was and enjoyed it, yet still retained an inexplicable nobility. Wolfman combined multi issue tales with interlude issues and issues such as 25, introducing a vampire detective, in which Dracula is only a peripheral character. Highlights include Blade killing Dracula and his revival (13-14), two battles against Dr Sun (19-21 and 38-42) and some of the later issues in which Dracula's vampiric abilities were removed by Satan. An excellent one issue tale can be found in 54, when Dracula's son is born. The first giant size issue is called Giant Size Chillers and is the only GS issue that ties into the continuity of the main book.

MARVEL
Apr 72-Apr 79(69)
Aug 79
70 issues
5 GS Jun 74-Jun 75

12-14,19-21,25-29,
37-42,46-49,51-56,
59-62,66,67,
Chillers 1.

FF

TOR

Introduced with a whole slew of new fantasy characters in 1975, Tor was a revival of Joe Kubert's 50's caveman series. Only the first issue contained new material and the reprints

DC
Jun 75-Apr 76
6 issues

seem very dated today.

FP

TOWER OF SHADOWS

Really a continuation of Marvel's 50's horror tales, but produced by then current Marvel staff. There's stuff by Thomas, Adams, Wein, Smith, Colan, Steranko and Wood among others. From issue 6 there was only one new tale, backed by reprints. The title changed to Creatures on the Loose with 10.

MARVEL
Sep 69-Jan 71
9 issues
1 special 71

1-6.

FP

TRIGGER TWINS

Western reprints featuring the twins and a great Pow Wow Smith story by Fox and Infantino make for an interesting one shot.

DC
Mar 73
1 issue

SW

TWO GUN KID

Lawyer Matt Hawk secretly keeps law and order in the wild west of the 1870's as the Two Gun Kid.

Lee and Kirby revamped the 50's masked man in 1962. An extraordinary sidekick named Boom Boom followed 4 issues later and success was assured. The secret identity twist and humorous touches made this entertaining reading and the mid-sixties team of Skeates and Ayers produced some noteworthy stories. Issues from 99 onwards are reprint.

MARVEL
Mar 48-Nov 49(11)
Dec 53-Apr 61(59)
Nov 62-Mar 68(92)
Jul 70-Apr 77
136 issues

SW

2001, A SPACE ODYSSEY

Jack Kirby's attempts to go beyond the film resulted in a string of boring, repetitive stories and quick cancellation. The last 3 issues introduced Machine Man.

MARVEL
Dec 76-Sep 77
10 issues

DWC

UNCANNY TALES

Another horror reprint mag. Did you know that between Dec 73 and Dec 75 Marvel had 8 of these mags running concurrently? Someone must like them.

MARVEL
Dec 73-Oct 75
12 issues

FP

UNEXPECTED

This comic, once known as Tales of the Unexpected, offered stories that featured an unexpected twist at the end for much of its early period. Most involved a science fiction theme and there were a few series, such as the Space Ranger in 43-82. Throughout the 70's the usual average mystery stories have predominated, but there are a few nice pieces of art here and there. Issues 189-198 were in the dollar comic format and incorporated House of Secrets and Witching Hour. Johnny Peril has returned as a regular feature from 205.

DC
From Mar 56
208 issues +

HY

UNKNOWN SOLDIER

This comic carried on from Star Spangled War stories and is always well written by Bob Haney. Back-ups include the Blackhawks and Capt Fear (a native Caribbean hero who premiered in Adventure).

DC
(205) From May 77
249 issues +

HY

UNTOLD LEGEND OF THE BATMAN

The second DC miniseries, although having an unconvincing plot by Len Wein, is a nice romp down memory lane for all Batman fans. John Byrne drew the first issues and Jim Aparo the other 2. The whole series is a collection of scenes from earlier issues, and although it highlights the amazing number of coincidences in the Batman legend, it is worthwhile reading.

DC
Jul 80-Sep 80
3 issues

1-3.

DWC

VAULT OF EVIL

Oh, you guessed it from the title did you? Yes, this is yet another set of nifty horror reprints from Marvel's inexhaustible supply.

MARVEL
Feb 73-Nov 75
22 issues

FP

VENGEANCE SQUAD

This poor title from writer Joe Gill featured a group of crime fighters who ran through a series of nondescript adventures. The book is only interesting for its back-up feature, which starred Mauser, the seedy detective from E-Man by the same team of Nic Cuti and Joe Staton. The stories have a great whimsical humour and make up for the awful lead feature.

CHARLTON
Jul 75-May 76
6 issues

DWC

WANTED

A good series of reprints mixing golden and silver age stories. Most issues can be recommended.

DC
Aug 72-Sep 73
9 issues

DWC

WAR IS HELL

Although the first 8 issues reprinted 50's war stories and a couple of issues of Sgt Fury, Chris Claremont was handed the scripting chores for his first regular series with 9, turning it into an interesting title. "Starring" the spirit of a dead soldier forced to relive the horrors of war, this must be one of the better war comics as it avoids all the cliches and twist endings that are usually so prominent.

MARVEL
Jan 73-Oct 75
15 issues

APS

WARLOCK

Originally known as Him, Warlock was created by 4 scientists trying to produce a "perfect man of the future" back in Fantastic Four 66,67. Possessing a great intelligence, golden skin and invulnerability to virtually everything, he saw the evil of his makers' ways and left earth to seek his destiny among

MARVEL
Aug 72-Oct 73(8)
Oct 75-Nov 76
15 issues

1,2,5-7,9-12,15.

the stars. In Marvel Premiere 1 (his first own strip), his life was finally given a purpose. The High Evolutionary's attempt to create a copy of the earth orbiting on the far side of the sun, but without all the evils of mankind, failed, but instead of destroying it, Warlock persuaded him to let himself become that earth's champion. That part of his life is chronicled in Warlock 1-8 and wrapped up in Incredible Hulk 176-178, wherein he finally succeeded. Very disillusioned with all that he had experienced, he once again sought the stars for solitude and became involved with the Magus in Strange Tales 178-181 and Warlock 9-11. After the second cancellation, his storyline (and life) were concluded by the man who had written and drawn his revival, Jim Starlin, in Avengers Annual 7 and Marvel 2 in 1 Annual 2.

It's difficult to fault any issue of Warlock.

APS

WARLORD

Creator, writer and artist Mike Grell has taken the old idea of a hidden land within the earth and used it to its fullest potential. Although writing and art have not been spectacular, Grell has never made the series predictable. He has used some nice concepts such as merging science with sword and sorcery, differing the series from others dealing with sword and sorcery or barbarians. Back-up features have included Wizard World and Omac by Jim Starlin, concluding the story begun in Kamandi 59. Kamandi himself is now the permanent back-up feature.

DC
Feb 76-Apr 76(2)
From Nov 76
43 issues +

24,28.

HY

WEIRD MYSTERY TALES

Yet another average mystery comic, this title offered a few good stories with nice art amongst the mundane majority. The first 2 issues do, however, stand out since they contain Jack Kirby stories which were originally planned for his black and white magazine, Spirit World.

DC
Aug 72-Nov 75
24 issues

HY

WEIRD SUSPENSE

This title featured a hero who was tasteless even by Atlas standards and must have a strong claim to being the tackiest hero ever. The Tarantula was the creation of Mike Fleisher and he (the Tarantula, not Fleisher) ensnared his victims in a web, injected them with poison and ate them. Not to be taken before meals and only for those with a strong stomach.

ATLAS
Feb 75-Sep 75
4 issues

FP

WEIRD WAR TALES

This is the usual DC mystery story comic, the only difference being that all the tales have a war theme. There are gems in the compost here (Marshall Rogers drew 51 and 52) but they take some searching out.

DC
From Oct 71
97 issues +

FP

WEIRD WESTERN TALES

Carrying on the numbering from All Star Western with 12, the first few issues saw

DC
(12)Jul 72-Aug 80
70 issues



Jonah Hex ousting all other features from the book. He'd done so by 19 and despite the book almost being cancelled more than once he moved into his own series after 38. All the Hex stories are good, the best being 27 (where Jonah becomes involved with an early women's lib movement) and 35, when he enters a town where hanging is treated as a form of entertainment. In issue 39 Brian Savage, Scalphunter, a white man raised by the Kiowa Indians, took over the title until it was scrapped. Later issues had some nice Gerry Conway stories and Scalphunter is now occasional back-up in Jonah Hex's book.

22-25,27,34-38.

FF

WEIRD WONDER TALES

Yet another comic that reprinted the horror tales produced by Marvel in the 50's. Venus is featured in 16-18 and Dr Druid in the next four issues, but the only issue of interest is 7. That featured the individual stories of the characters who later formed the Headmen, predominant villains in Steve Gerber's Defenders. Even that is only for completists, as the stories are no better than the usual 50's reprints.

MARVEL
Dec 73-May 77
22 issues

FP

WEIRD WORLDS

Issues 7-7 featured Edgar Rice Burrough's John Carter and Pellucidar, both superbly adapted by Wein, Wolfman and O'Neil. Issues 8-10 starred Iron Wolf, a superb science and sorcery series set in the future, created by Denny O'Neil and Howard Chaykin. Highly recommended.

DC
Sep 72-Feb 74(9)
Nov 74
10 issues

1-10.

HY

WELCOME BACK KOTTER

A nice humorous title based on an American TV series about a teacher, Kotter, and his misfit pupils. Not as good as the Bash Street Kids, but then what is?

DC
Nov 76-Apr 78
10 issues

HY

WEREWOLF BY NIGHT

This is a truly amazing comic, because it managed to last as long as it did. The first Giant Size issue is titled Giant Size Creatures and guest stars Tigra. Jack Russell's father was cursed on reading an ancient magical tome to the effect that all his offspring turned into werewolves for 3 nights a month once they had reached their 18th birthdays (see Marvel Spotlight (1) 2-4). Marvel decided that the strip was most suited to the supernatural/fantasy vein (as far as I can see it wasn't suited to anything) and since the whole series is related by Jack Russell, a typically cynical American teenager, his narration produces a grating contrast to the mood of the stories. Every author managed to turn out some truly ridiculous coincidences and plot events, in addition to a sense of pacing that would shame a legless corpse. Mike Flogg drew some nice issues in the first 16 and 31-33 (the latter 2 introducing Moon Knight, by Doug Moench) were just about acceptable, but otherwise.....

MARVEL
Sep 72-Mar 77
43 issues
5 GS Jul 74-Jul 75

APS

WESTERN ACTION

A cliché ridden lead story starring Kid Cody, Gunfighter was backed up by an equally fatuous tale of the Comanche Kid, a white boy brought up by Red Indians. "Comics are entertainment" proclaimed Atlas all over their text pages. This wasn't.

ATLAS

Feb 75
1 issue

APS

WESTERN GUNFIGHTERS

The first 7 issues (all giant sized) each contained 1 original lead story of the western Ghost Rider by the almost inevitable combination of Gary Friedrich and Dick Ayers. The back-up strips plus the latter 26 issues reprinted a variety of 50's western tales including Apache Kid, Wyatt Earp, Tex Dawson and Kid Colt.

MARVEL

Aug 70-Nov 75
33 issues

APS

WESTERN KID

This reprinted four truly bad Tex Dawson tales per issue, some with bad Romita art. Someone must have bought these, because Tex was later given his own reprint title.

MARVEL

Dec 71-Aug 72
5 issues

FP

WESTERN TEAM-UP

A one shot title that contained reprints of the Rawhide Kid, the Dakota Kid and the Gunslinger Kid by Jack Davis.

MARVEL

Nov 73
1 issue

FP

WHAT IF

Conceived as Marvel's alternative to the much derided DC imaginary stories, What If takes critical moments in the history of Marvel-earth and presents them as they occurred in parallel universes, where one factor diverged from the tale that was familiar to the reader, creating a totally different scenario. An example is issue 20, in which the Avengers intervene in the Kree-Skrull war (detailed in Avengers 89-97), without the aid of Rick Jones. Given the scope of the series, it has been very disappointing so far, with the trite and the trivial outnumbering good stories by about 4 to 1. The recommended issues have the FF in 1, the Invaders in 4, a story in which Conan is transported through time into the present (13) and Spider-man using his powers to become a TV star rather than a superhero, in 19.

MARVEL

From Feb 77
24 issues +

1,4,13,19,20.

FP

WHERE CREATURES ROAM

Another reprint title, this time with 50's monster stories. It's obviously cheaper than paying for new material.

MARVEL

Jul 70-Sep 71
8 issues

FP

WHERE MONSTERS DWELL

The longest running of all the Marvel 50's reprint horror titles.

MARVEL

Jan 70-Oct 75
38 issues

FP

THE WITCHING HOUR

One of DC's Horror-mystery titles, featuring 2-4 short stories, with introductions to each by the comic's 3 resident witches: Mildred, Mordred and the slinky Cynthia. I must admit to having a weakness for the 3 witches, who were drawn in the earlier issues by either Alex Toth or Neal Adams. The stories were good too, especially the first 16 or so issues.

DC
Mar 69-Oct 78
85 issues

10,14.

SW

WONDER WOMAN

This comic has changed direction more times than Gerry Conway has changed companies. It was quite stable until the mid sixties, when the stories became light hearted and usually involved Steve Trevor, unless they were centred on Paradise Island with Wonder Woman's friends and family. (Whatever did happen to Wonder Tot?) Issues 178-203 featured the new look Wonder Woman, where the Amazon lost her powers to become plain Diana Prince, martial arts expert. She was trained by a blind oriental named I-Ching. This was a well-written series influenced by Mike Sekowsky; even his art was above average. The stories featured sword and sorcery, fantasy, the Gods of Olympus, King Arthur of Camelot and many pure adventure stories. Issues 212-222 had Wonder Woman regaining her powers and performing 12 tasks to see if she was suitable to rejoin the JLA, which she had left on losing her powers. Steve Trevor had died during the new look period and a good new direction began with his revival, but this promising storyline was interrupted by issues 228-243 featuring the earth 2 Wonder Woman in stories set in WW2. This was done because the Wonder Woman TV series was set in that period. The 1978 spectacular was excellent, featuring the gods of Olympus intervening in the war. The earth 1 Wonder Woman returned in 244 and Steve Trevor died yet again. The latest change of direction started in issue 269, with Wonder Woman returning to Paradise Island. Her origin was virtually duplicated as she returned to the "man's world", accompanied by a Steve Trevor from an alternate dimension. The book has been quite interesting since then and it features a good back-up strip starring the Huntress, which began in 271.

DC
From Summer 43
277 issues +
1 spectacular 78

178-203,
spectacular 78.

HY

WORLD'S FINEST

The stories of the world's finest team of Superman and Batman in the early 1960's were fun to read, but nothing very special. The mid sixties, however, produced many memorable stories that relied on plot rather than great superhero action or characterisation, a characteristic of editor Mort Weisinger's books. Weisinger's connection with the Superman range of comics clearly influenced the stories and setting, which were always more suited to the man from Krypton rather than the Batman. Julie Schwarz edited the book for issues 198-214 and he turned it into a Superman team-up comic. People such as Green Arrow, Dr Fate, Vigilante and Martian Manhunter guest starred in some nice stories. Murray Boltinoff took over as editor from 215, bringing Bob Haney with him. He returned the Batman to the book in a series of abominable and embarrassing stories, the Super Sons of Superman and Batman standing out as particularly bad.

DC
From Spring 41
267 issues +

141-151, 159, 163,
164, 169, 171, 175,
176, 178, 180, 198-
214.

Since issue 244 the book has been a dollar comic and, while the

Superman/Batman team-ups have been as inane as ever, the other features have been reasonably handled. On the whole, this comic hasn't lived up to its title.

HY

WORLD OF KRYPTON

DC's first mini-series chronicled all the events surrounding Superman's parents, Jor-El and Lara, up to Krypton exploding. A well produced reference for Superman fans.

DC
Jul 79-Sep 79
3 issues

HY

WORLDS UNKNOWN

For its first 6 issues this comic ran rather good adaptations of SF novels, by the Marvel staff. The last 2 issues featured an adaptation of the film screenplay for "The Golden Voyage of Sinbad", by Len Wein and George Tuska.

MARVEL
May 73-Aug 74
8 issues

FP

WULF THE BARBARIAN

The one comic generic staple that Atlas managed to do a consistently good job on was Barbarians. Wulf was no exception. Born of royal stock, Wulf was searching for the sorcerer whose forces overthrew and killed his parents. Even three artists in four issues don't detract from the overall enjoyment of the series.

ATLAS
Feb 75-Sep 75
4 issues

1-4.

TF

WYATT EARP

Exploits of the famous frontier marshall, reprinted from the 1950's. The stories are by Stan Lee and Dick Ayers and are all flaccid western fare, as are the accompanying western reprints by Lee with such talents as Williamson, Morrow and Torres on art. This revival was deservedly short lived.

MARVEL
Nov 55-Jun 60(29)
Oct 72-Jun 73
34 issues

SW

X-MEN

Cyclops, Beast, Iceman, Marvel Girl and Angel were all mutants with an extra ability over the norm, hence their team name: the X-Men. Early issues were by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby and were excellent until the conclusion of the first Sentinels story (16). Roy Thomas took over the book and, with Werner Roth art, he produced a fine two parter in 22-23. Thomas combined fights against old enemies with the omnipresent threat of Factor Three. Some individual issues, such as 28 (introducing the Banshee), were good, but the series dragged, with Factor Three (one letter writer said they sounded like a toothpaste) being anticlimatic when eventually revealed. They were defeated in 39 and Gary Friedrich began writing the book after a couple of non descript fillers, with 44. Arnold Drake followed in a period which was the X-Men's nadir, despite art by Jim Steranko in 50 and 51 and Barry Smith's Kirby swipes in 53.

MARVEL
Sep 63-Mar 70(66)
Dec 70-Apr 75(93)
From Aug 75
143 issues +
4 annuals 70, 71, 79,
80.
2 GS Jun 75-Sep 75

1-16, 22, 23, 28, 29,
57-63, 97-105, 107-
109, 111-114, 120-
124, 129-142, GS 1.

The X-Men needed rescuing by someone more powerful than they were, and so Roy Thomas returned with issue 56, bringing Neal Adams with him. The resulting 10 issues, including a fill-in by Don Heck, were excellent, but the book peaked too late and 67-93 reprinted issues 13-45. In June 75 Giant Size X-Men 1 saw Len Wein introduce a new team of X-Men and Claremont began scripting with the first revived issue, 94. The rest is history. Apart from an indifferent Bill Mantlo fill-in (106), Claremont, Dave Cockrum (art 94-105, 107) and John Byrne (art 108, 109, 111-143) have produced an exemplary series that has picked up Eagle Awards by the truckfull.

FP

YANG

Usual Chinese kung fu, this time set in the 1890's in China and the wild west and featuring the traditional yellow peril. Joe Gill's writing is okay if you want to get outside the more common New York settings, though the art by Warren Satter is nothing special.

CHARLTON

Nov 73-May 76
13 issues

DWC

ADDENDA

CAPTAIN NICE

This was a one-off comic based on a TV comedy series. There were 4 uncredited stories here. The first (and worst) featured a villain named the Rooster, who had a compulsion to literally crow about his crimes as the sun rose. He is captured at night in a deserted warehouse after Captain Nice shines a spotlight in. The Rooster, thinking it is dawn, begins to crow, thus giving his position away. Pathetic stuff.

GOLD KEY

Nov 67
1 issue

FP

CHARLTON PREMIERE

A short-lived showcase title for Charlton's short-lived "Action Heroes" of the mid 60's. High spots include Grass Green's Plastic Man clone, the Shape in 1 and "Children of Doom" by Denny O'Neil and Pat Boyette. 1 also stars the Spookman - archaeologist Aaron Piper becomes the grisly time traveller with the aid of his moonstone amulet - excellent, if whimsical, stuff from Boyette. 3 contains Charlton's only team-up - Blue Beetle and the Peacemaker - and 4 features Ditko's Unlikely Tales.

CHARLTON

Sep 67-May 68
4 issues

SW

CHEYENNE KID

The first 7 issues went under the title of Wild Frontier. This was a below average western comic, notable only for the Wander back-up strip in 66-87. This features a galactic merchant from Sirius 5, stranded on earth in the wild west. Written by Denny (Sergius O'Shaughnessy) O'Neil and drawn by Jim Aparo, they both had their tongues firmly in their cheeks. The best western satire this side of Batlash.

CHARLTON

(8)Jun 57-Nov 73
99 issues

SW

DOCTOR SOLAR

Atomic scientist Dr Solar leads a double life as the Man of the Atom and his miraculous nuclear powers are devoted to world peace.

Characterised by the same high quality as its sister strip, Magnus Robot Fighter, this strip is worth considering with other 60's fare. The plotting becomes quite interesting from about issue 20 and Al McWilliamas turns in some fine artwork.

GOLD KEY
Oct 62-Apr 69
27 issues

SW

FLASH GORDON

King Features handled the first 11 issues, with Charlton producing 12-18, before the rights fell to Gold Key.

Created by the great Alex Raymond in the 30's, Flash's 60's chronicles were initiated by Archie Goodwin and Al Williamson and the few issues by this team are among the finest comics produced in the sixties. After they left, some notable work by the likes of Kane, Grandall and Raboy followed as well as early art from Jeff Jones (13) and Mike Kaluta (18) in the Charlton issues. Despite the establishing of Pat Boyette as regular artist the book was cancelled due to consistently poor scripting.

Gold Key's 70's revival had far stronger scripts (by John Warner in later issues) and some passable sub Williamson art by Carlos Garzon, but sadly the comics recession nipped this promising series in the bud.

GOLD KEY
Sep 66-Dec 67(11)
Feb 69-Jan 70(18)
Nov 78-Jul 79
24 issues
=====

1,4,5.

SW

JUDOMASTER

The first 88 issues appeared under the titles Six Gun Heroes and Gun Master.

In the final months of WW2, Sgt Rip Jagger becomes the freebooting Judomaster. From his island base he and his band of raiders foil Japanese sabotage attempts in the South Pacific. The strip, written and drawn by Frank McLaughlin, and debuting in Charlton Special War Series 4, proved to be one of Charlton's best. The back-up feature, Sarge Steel by Steve Skeates and (mainly) Dick Giordano, is also excellent, making for an eminently readable comic.

CHARLTON
(89)Jun 66-Dec 67
98 issues

SW

KA-ZAR THE SAVAGE

The third attempt at a series for the Lord of the Hidden Land has so far been produced by Erace Jones and Brent Anderson. Shanna the She-Devil has been a regular supporting character and so far the series shows great promise.

MARVEL
From April 81

FP

SECRETS OF THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES

This was the third DC mini series and it dealt with the 30th century teenagers. A loose framing plot was set around a retelling of the Legionnaires' origins. Although some origins were new to the reader the book didn't live up to its title. WARNING: Every issue carries a Jack Harris text page.

DC
Jan 81-Mar 81
3 issues

FP

SUPER COPS

A pre Starsky and Hutch police adventure comic, featuring several short strips written by Marv "Channing" with some notable artwork by Gray Morrow and Frank Thorne among others.

RED CIRCLE

July 74

1 issue

SW

TALES OF THE GREEN LANTERN CORPS

Whilst providing as much background information as the other DC mini series, these issues, written by Barr and Wein with Staton art, have provided the best framing plot so far.

DC

May 81-Jul 81

3 issues

FP

THE HARVEY THRILLERS: As well as presenting Eisner's Spirit, Harvey dutifully produced a superhero line in the 60's. None of the line lasted beyond 3 issues, but many are noteworthy.

DOUBLE DARE ADVENTURES (2 issues) featured Magicmaster. Jimmy Apollo, kid magician, twists his magic amulet to summon Kazzam, Magicmaster, from ancient Egypt. Need I say more? The title also featured beautiful fill-in strips by Williamson and Crandall plus B-Man and the Glowing Gladiator. JIGSAW (2), man of a thousand parts was an extraordinary super detective trapped in a mundane strip. SPYMAN (3), the super-spy with the electro robot hand, had one heck of a plotter and Tuska's art holds the strip together. Worth a look. THRILL-O-RAMA (3) featured mystery stories told by a man in black, Fate, and drawn by Bob Powell. An extremely average underwater strip called Piranha is also present (just). UNEARTHLY SPECTACULARS (3) starred Jack Q Frost, the coolest spy around, whose quick freeze powers were rarely used to any effect by his daft scripter. Then there's Miracles Inc, a promising super group spoof with crisp art and what read like Joe Simon scripts. Fill-ins for the title included the 3 Rocketeers by Simon and Kirby and strips by Grass Green and Al Williamson.

SW

A.C.G. PUBLISHING: During the mid 60's superhero boom ACG made their play with heroes fronting their old mystery/suspense mags. Magicman appeared in Forbidden Worlds from 125 to 141. He had pretty vague magical powers which he used to combat pretty non-magical villains, with the aid of his assistant, Kilkenny. The consistently uninspired art of Pete Costanza is entirely appropriate to the mundane scripts. Nemesis, from Adventures Into The Unknown, was a little more interesting. Detective Steve Funt was killed by the mafia and returned from the grave as Nemesis, supernatural scourge of evil (does this sound familiar to Spectre fans?). This character is a whole lot more bearable than Magicman, whom he meets in Forbidden Worlds 136. Chic Stone's nice artwork is a definite advantage. John Force, Magic Agent had his own comic for 3 issues in 1962 and was revived to appear occasionally in Unknown Worlds. He was basically a spy with ESP and the customary eyepatch and raincoat. It is worth noting that although most stories are credited to Zev Zimmer (Magicman) and Shane O'Shea (Nemesis) they were all written by editor Richard E. Hughes.

SW

Since completing the main body of the text, a number of changes have occurred. Mystery In Space has been cancelled again with issue 117, cover dated March 1981. Man-Thing (2) was cancelled with the July 1981 issue, 11, and Super Friends is reported to be cancelled with issue 47, August 81, although the final issue has yet to appear. Charlton Bullseye, using the title of the old Charlton house fanzine, is a new showcase comic featuring comic stories and art submitted by fans. The first issue was cover dated June 1981.



OUR FAVOURITE COMICS

Steve Whitaker:

Adam Strange in Mystery in Space 53-91 by Fox and Infantino
The Batman in Detective 471-476 by Englehart and Rogers
Blue Beetle and the Question in Captain Atom 83-86, Blue Beetle 1-5,
and Mysterious Suspense 1 by Ditko
Flash Gordon 1,4 & 5 by Goodwin and Williamson
Hawkman in Brave and Bold 34-36 and 42-44 by Fox and Kubert
Green Lantern and Green Arrow in Green Lantern 76-87,89 by O'Neil
and Adams
Man-Thing 5-11 and GS1 by Gerber and Ploog
Rima 1-7 by Kanigher and Redondo
The Shadow 1-4,6 by O'Neil and Kaluta
Swamp Thing in House of Secrets 92 and Swamp Thing 1-10 by Wein and
Wrightson

Frank Plowright:

Asterix by Goscinny and Uderzo (translated by Bell and Hockridge)
Avengers 129-135,137-144,147-151,GS 2-4 by Englehart
Avengers 56-86, Annual 2 by Thomas
The Batman in Detective 471-476 by Englehart and Rogers
Dracula 7-70 by Wolfman and Colan
Justice League of America 100-114 by Wein and Dillin
Secret Society of Super Villains 1-15,Spectacular by Conway and
Rozakis
The Spirit 1-26 by Eisner
Teen Titans 33-43 by Haney, Tuska, Cardy and Saaf
X-Men 94-105,107-146,GS 1 by Claremont, Cockrum and Byrne

Hassan Yusuf:

The Batman in Detective 471-476 by Englehart and Rogers
Doom Patrol 86-121 by Drake and Premiani
Green Lantern and Green Arrow in Green Lantern 76-87,89 by O'Neil
and Adams
The Legion of Super-Heroes in Adventure 346-380 by Shooter
Manhunter in Detective 437-443 by Goodwin and Simonson
The New Gods trilogy in New Gods 1-12, Forever People 1-11,
Mr Miracle 1-18 and Jimmy Olsen 133-139,141-
148 by Kirby
The Shadow 1-4,6 by O'Neil and Kaluta
Swamp Thing 1-10 by Wein and Wrightson
Warlock in Strange Tales 178-181 and Warlock 9-15 by Starlin
X-Men 108-143 by Claremont and Byrne

Dave Cutler:

The Batman in Detective 471-476 by Englehart and Rogers

Batman Spectacular 1978

Blue Beetle and the Question in Blue Beetle 1-5 and Mysterious
Suspense 1 by Ditko

Captain America 247-255 by Stern and Byrne

Daredevil 158-172 by Mc Kenzie and Miller

Manhunter in Detective 437-443 by Goodwin and Simonson

Plastic Man in DC Special 15 by Cole

Spiderman 31-33 by Ditko

The Spirit 1 & 2 (Harvey) by Eisner

Swamp Thing 1-10 by Wein and Wrightson

Adrian Snowdon:

Avengers 127-135, 137-144, 147-149, GS 2-4 by Englehart

Captain Marvel 25-33 by Starlin

Daredevil 108-112 by Gerber

Daredevil 146-154 by Shooter

Defenders 46-51 by Kraft

Man-Thing in Fear 18 by Gerber

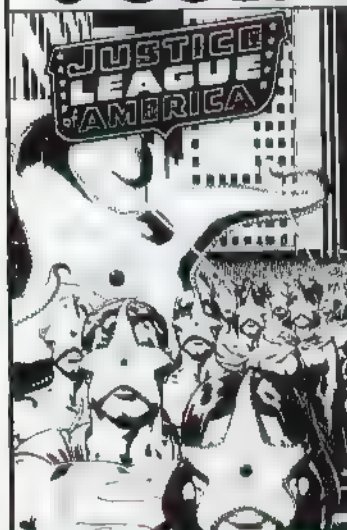
Giant Size Man-Thing 4 by Gerber

Spiderman 121-150 by Conway

Warlock in Strange Tales 178-181, Warlock 9-15, Avengers Annual 7
by Starlin

X-Men 129-137 by Claremont and Byrne

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EAGLE AWARDS 1976-1979

Since their introduction in 1976 by Richard Burton and Mike Conroy, the annual Eagle awards voted for by British comic fans and presented at the yearly convention, have become an integral part of fandom's year. Apart from 1978, there has been an initial nomination ballot, with the highest polling nominees winning a place on the final voting form. The following is a listing of the winners in the American comic section from 1976-1979. The figures after the winners are the number of votes polled.



1976

FAVOURITE COMIC BOOK ARTIST

Neal Adams	106
John Buscema	83
Paul Gulacy	78
Jim Starlin	69
Barry Smith	60
Pass	14

FAVOURITE COMIC BOOK: HUMOUR

Howard the Duck	312
Plastic Man	31
Plop	27
Pass	40

FAVOURITE B&W COMIC: HUMOUR

Mad	178
Crazy	41
Cracked	26
Pass	165

FAVOURITE COMIC BOOK TEAM

X-Men	153
Avengers	117
Defenders	80
Pass	60

FAVOURITE SINGLE COMIC STORY

Howard the Duck 3	111
"Four Fethers of Death"	
Steve Gerber/John Buscema	
Howard the Duck 1	109
"Howard the Barbarian"	
Steve Gerber/Frank Brunner	
Fantastic Four 176	97
"Improbable as it may seem, the Impossible Man is back in Town"	
Roy Thomas/George Perez	
Pass	93

ROLL OF HONOUR

Stan Lee	195	Jim Steranko	85	Jack Kirby	75	Pass	55
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FAVOURITE COMIC BOOK WRITER

Roy Thomas	142
Steve Gerber	132
Steve Englehart	105
Pass	31

FAVOURITE COMIC BOOK: DRAMATIC

X-Men	151
Warlock	124
Master of Kung-Fu	91
Pass	44

FAVOURITE B&W COMIC: DRAMATIC

Savage Sword of Conan	232
Marvel Preview	76
Doc Savage	59
Pass	43

FAVOURITE COMIC BOOK CHARACTER

Conan	141
Howard the Duck	114
Warlock	96
Pass	59

FAVOURITE NEW COMIC TITLE

Howard the Duck	194
Nova	91
Omega	85
Pass	40

FAVOURITE CONTINUED COMIC STORY

Master of Kung-Fu 48-51	137
Doug Moench/Paul Gulacy	
X-Men 98-100	109
Chris Claremont/Dave Cockrum	
Defenders 31-40, Annual 1	90
Steve Gerber/Sal Buscema	
Pass	73

1977

FAVOURITE COMIC BOOK ARTIST

Neal Adams	188
Jim Starlin	149
John Byrne	104
Marshall Rogers	97
George Perez	72

FAVOURITE COMIC BOOK: DRAMATIC

X-Men	203
Detective	165
Conan	102
Avengers	98
Defenders	48

FAVOURITE B&W MAGAZINE

Savage Sword of Conan	230
Marvel Preview	155
Rampaging Hulk	111
Creepy	47
Eerie	43

FAVOURITE CHARACTER

Batman	157
Warlock	150
Conan	114
Howard the Duck	108
Wolverine	84

FAVOURITE TEAM

X-Men	221
Avengers	124
Fantastic Four	103
Justice Society	97
Defenders	68

FAVOURITE SINGLE COMIC BOOK STORY

Avengers Annual 7	210
"The Final Threat"	
Jim Starlin/Jim Starlin	
Marvel Preview 11	146
Starlord	
Chris Claremont/John Byrne	
Detective 472	92
"I Am The Batman"	
Steve Englehart/Marshall Rogers	
Marvel Premiere 38	64
"The Lord of Tyndall's Quest"	
Doug Moench/Mike Ploog	
Howard the Duck 16	61
"The Zen and Art of Comic Book Writing"	
Steve Gerber/Various Artists	

ROLL OF HONOUR

Steve Englehart	176
Jack Kirby	118
Jim Steranko	117
Will Eisner	107
Howard the Duck	69

FAVOURITE COMIC BOOK WRITER

Steve Englehart	192
Steve Gerber	136
Chris Claremont	132
Roy Thomas	112
Marv Wolfman	40

FAVOURITE COMIC BOOK: HUMOUR

Howard the Duck	374
Mad	108
Plastic Man	54
Cracked	13
Crazy	7

FAVOURITE INKER

Terry Austin	204
Tom Palmer	123
Ernie Chan	98
Klaus Janson	83
Joe Sinnott	66

FAVOURITE SUPPORTING CHARACTER

Pip the Troll	139
Vision	135
Wolverine	119
Beverly Switzer	97
Impossible Man	81

FAVOURITE NEW TITLE

John Carter	173
Rampaging Hulk	129
Star Hunters	127
Shade	75
Star Wars	67

FAVOURITE CONTINUED COMIC STORY

Avengers An 7/MTIO An 2	192
Jim Starlin/Jim Starlin	
X-Men 105,107,108	118
Chris Claremont/Dave Cockrum, John Byrne	
Defenders 46-50	112
Dave Kraft/Keith Giffen	
Detective 471-472	108
Steve Englehart/Marshall Rogers	
Star Wars 1-6	48
George Lucas, Roy Thomas/Howie Chaykin	

FAVOURITE VILLAIN

Thanos	189
Dr Doom	136
Joker	102
Scorpio	94
Darkseid	69

FAVOURITE COMIC BOOK ARTIST

John Byrne	168
Marshall Rogers	44
George Perez	23
Mike Golden	16
Gene Colan	11

FAVOURITE COMIC BOOK

X-Men	176
Avengers	42
Detective	24
Tomb of Dracula	22
Jonah Hex	13

FAVOURITE COMIC BOOK INKER

Terry Austin	173
Tom Palmer	32
Bob Layton	24
Klaus Janson	20
Joe Sinnott	14

FAVOURITE CHARACTER

Batman	49
Wolverine	41
Howard the Duck	28
Conan	25
Spider-Man	18
Dr Strange	18

FAVOURITE TEAM

X-Men	260
Avengers	72
Fantastic Four	21
Defenders	18
Legion of Super-Heroes	13

FAVOURITE SINGLE COMIC BOOK STORY

X-Men 111	13
"Mindgames"	
Chris Claremont/John Byrne	
Avengers 178	12
"The Martyr Perplex"	
Steve Gerber/Carmino Infantino	
Superman VS Muhammed Ali	11
Denny O'Neil/Neal Adams	
X-Men 109	11
"Home are the Heroes"	
Chris Claremont/John Byrne	
Avengers 177	11
"The Hope and the Slaughter"	
Jim Shooter/Dave Wenzel	

ROLL OF HONOUR

Jack Kirby	45
Will Eisner	30
Seigel and Shuster	24
Steve Gerber	23
Superman	18

FAVOURITE COMIC BOOK WRITER

Chris Claremont	157
Steve Englehart	32
Roy Thomas	31
Steve Gerber	31
Doug Moench	27

FAVOURITE COMIC MAGAZINE

Savage Sword of Conan	100
Marvel Preview	75
Rampaging Hulk	40
Heavy Metal	34
1984	25

FAVOURITE COMIC BOOK COVER

Master of Kung Fu 67(Gulacy)	22
Detective 476 (Rogers)	18
X-Men 114 (Byrne)	17
X-Men 111 (Cockrum)	14
X-Men 113 (Byrne)	12

FAVOURITE SUPPORTING CHARACTER

Wolverine	70
Beast	28
Vision	19
Nightcrawler	14
Hawkeye	13
Beverley Switzer	13

FAVOURITE NEW TITLE

Micronauts	102
Spider-Woman	61
DC Presents	27
1984	26
Machine Man	22

FAVOURITE CONTINUED COMIC STORY

Avengers 167,168,170-177	77
Jim Shooter/Perez,S.Buscema,Wenzel	
X-Men 111-113	62
Chris Claremont/John Byrne	
Detective 475-476	46
Steve Englehart/Marshall Rogers	
Thor 272-278	13
Roy Thomas/John Buscema	
Captain Marvel 58-62	9
Doug Moench/Pat Broderick	
X-Men 114-116	9
Chris Claremont/John Byrne	

FAVOURITE VILLAIN

Magneto	84
Joker	59
Dr Doom	47
Michael/Korvac	29
Dr Bong	11
Death-Stalker	11

1979

FAVOURITE COMIC BOOK ARTIST

John Byrne	277
George Perez	99
John Buscema	68
Gene Colan	61
Pass	37

FAVOURITE COMIC BOOK

X-Men	297
Avengers	110
Master of Kung Fu	78
Pass	57

FAVOURITE COMIC BOOK INKER

Terry Austin	221
Bob Layton	127
Tom Palmer	107
Pass	87

FAVOURITE CHARACTER

Wolverine	200
Batman	179
Spider-Man	98
Pass	65

FAVOURITE TEAM

X-Men	308
Avengers	142
Fantastic Four	53
Pass	39

FAVOURITE SINGLE COMIC BOOK STORY

Iron Man 128	240
"Demon in a Bottle"	
Michelinie, Layton/Romita Jr	
X-Men Annual 3	178
"A Fire in the Sky"	
Chris Claremont/George Perez	
Marvel Two-In-One 51	80
"Full House, Dragons High"	
Peter Gillis/Frank Miller	
Pass	44

ROLL OF HONOUR

Roy Thomas	176
Will Eisner	108
Seigel and Schuster	100
Steve Gerber	97
Pass	61

FAVOURITE COMIC BOOK WRITER

Chris Claremont	257
Doug Moench	128
David Michelinie	97
Pass	60

FAVOURITE COMIC MAGAZINE

Howard the Duck	175
Savage Sword of Conan	165
Marvel Preview	164
Pass	38

FAVOURITE COMIC BOOK COVER

Avengers 185 (Perez)	199
Micronauts 7 (Golden)	161
Iron Man 128 (Romita Jr)	147
Pass	35

FAVOURITE SUPPORTING CHARACTER

Beast	208
Wolverine	197
Vision	107
Pass	30

FAVOURITE NEW TITLE

Howard the Duck	202
Rom	185
Time Warp	67
Pass	88

FAVOURITE CONTINUED COMIC STORY

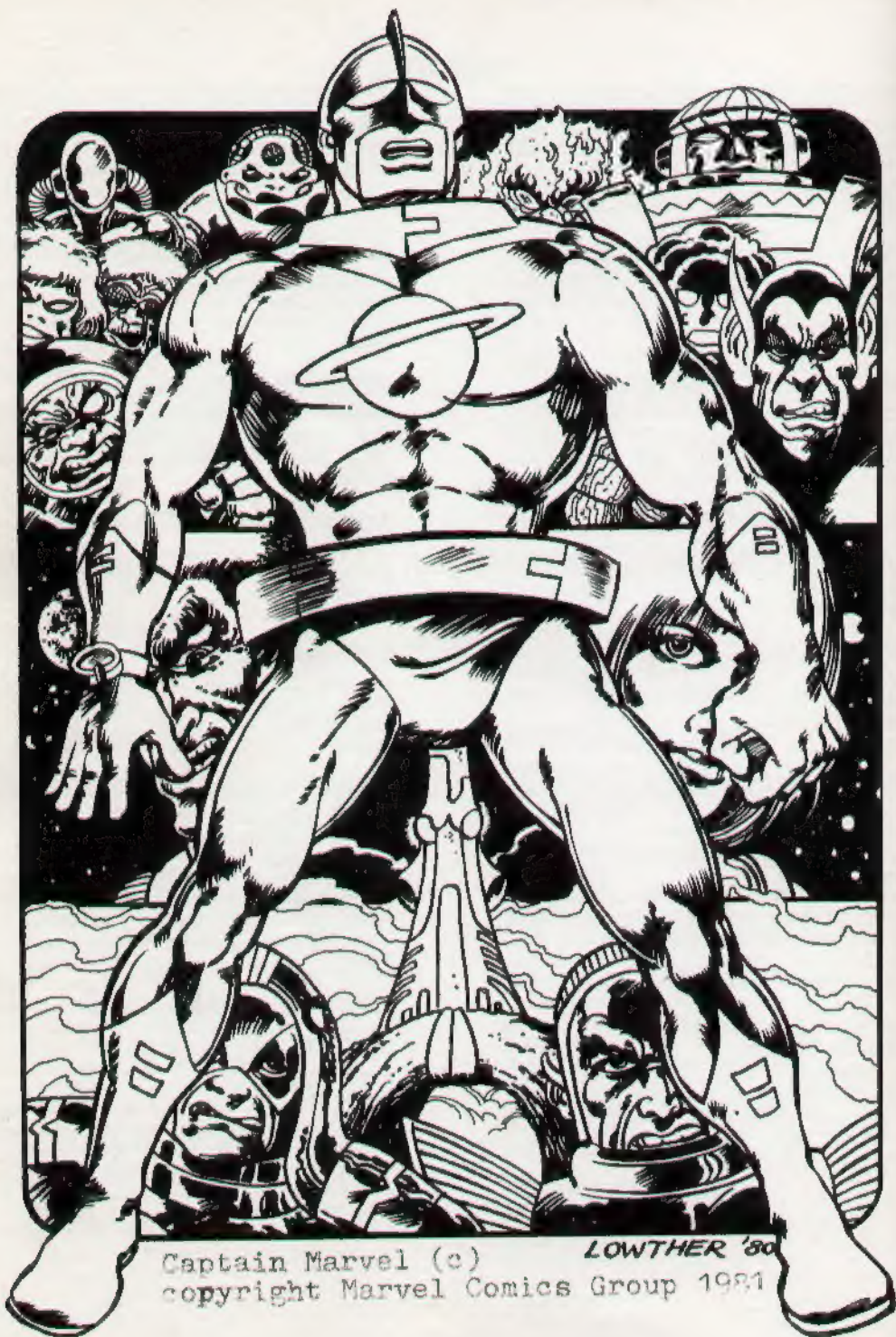
X-Men 125-128	222
Chris Claremont/John Byrne	
Micronauts 1-12	170
Bill Mantlo/Mike Golden	
Marvel Two-In-One 53-58	119
Mark Gruenwald, Ralph Macchio/	
John Byrne, George Perez	
Pass	31

FAVOURITE VILLAIN

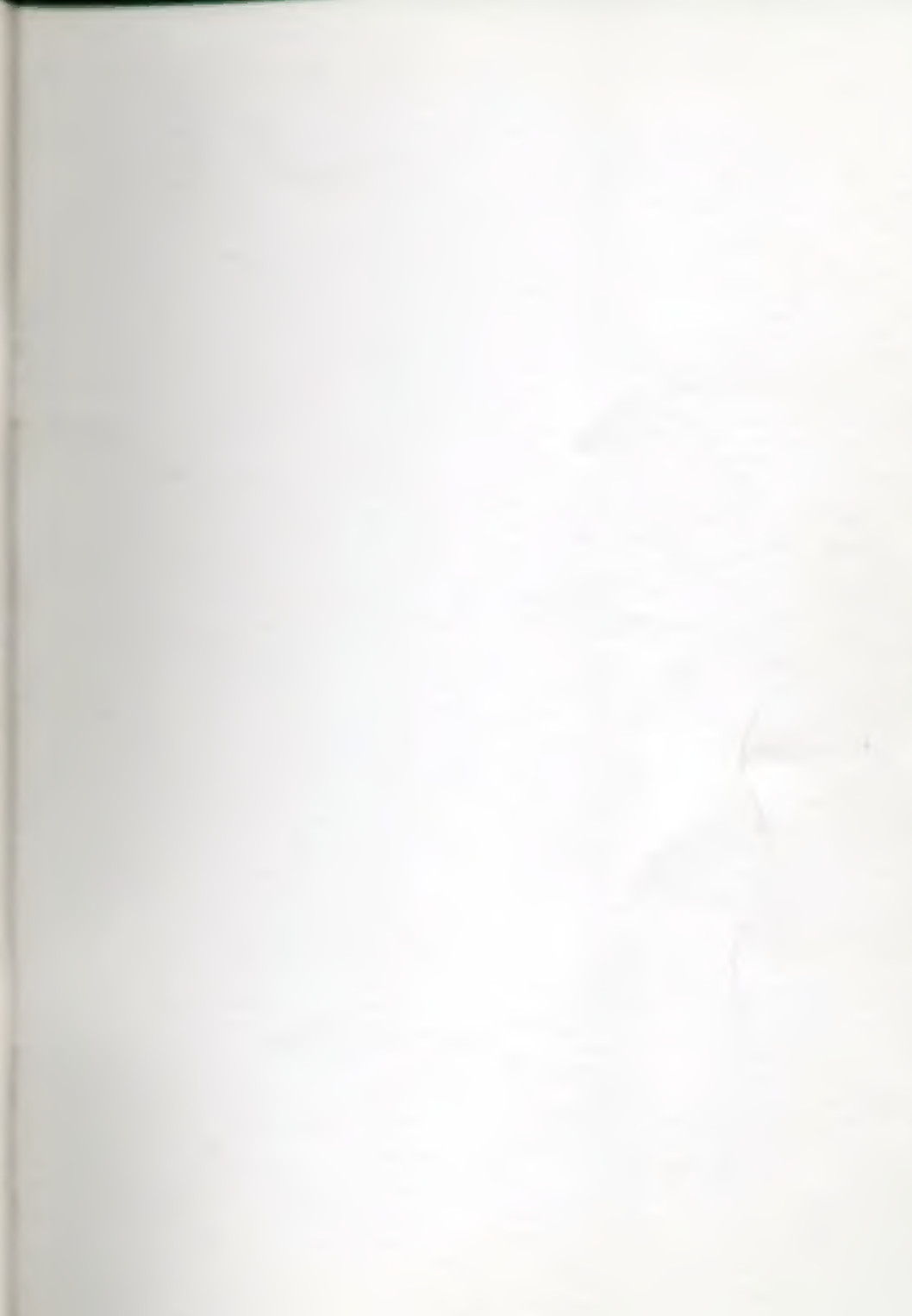
Magneto	216
Joker	163
Arcade	138
Pass	25

CHARACTER MOST WORTHY OF OWN TITLE

Warlock	179
Silver Surfer	178
Killraven	137
Pass	48



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BULLARD